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The Contexts of Kafka : Dystopia, Phantasy, Multiculturalism

One way in which stability expresses itself is the establishment of contexts. Why? Because an author, even one that is often described as modern or post-modern, in any case not a traditional kind of writer, can be read and interpreted in connection with other authors, of the past, or of the present, or of quite different environments. On the one hand such a reading is helpful and explanatory, it deepens our appropriation of the author under discussion. On the other hand, a contextual interpretation discovers a multitude of connecting lines between the author (Franz Kafka in our case) and others, thus reducing the impression of irrational disorder, or of total, arbitrary, invention. Contextual methodologies are, I maintain, an excellent technique for establishing a healthy balance between innovation and tradition.

My discussion of Kafka here, chiefly aspires to put on the table a few suggestions that aspire to enrich the multiplicity of contextualizations that are logical and plausible for writers in the mold of Franz Kafka. Such contextualizations, in the tradition of Comparative Literature, do not have to be based on strict historical causality, on social, religious, psychological determinations that can be measured and proved. Rather such parallels can also be theoretical, typological, or generic in their nature. In my view such analogies are as important as other, more firmly deterministic founded, contextualizations and explanations. In fact they can also serve as reliable vindications of the significance of the author. Such contextual approaches may be as numerous as the complexity of the author under discussion allows. In our case I will concentrate on three larger categories.

These are, in the first place the utopian/dystopian tradition which, to the best of my knowledge, has been seldom used as a tool in Kafka studies. Second, the somewhat more frequently examined connection with the Romantic and post-Romantic fantastic tradition, including a quick look at some contemporary (or almost-contemporary) figures; this I will do primarily with the intention of providing a foundation to the dystopian argument, , i.e. in order to show how the first is the crystallization of the broader second (fantastic) argument. Finally, and third, I will add a very few allusions to possible analogies to the techniques of non-European writings, especially one major classical Chinese novel. My methodology will not seek depth, it will rather deal in extension, it will pursue the dimension of breadth. That is why I will limit myself to the discussion of a relatively small number of prominent works.

Let me begin by recalling a few generally known and accepted facts. Dystopia is not one of the subgenres that is often discussed in histories of fictional literature. The reasons are easy to understand. Like its elder sister, utopia/eutopia, dystopia finds itself at the crossing point of three vast and powerful realms of discourse and action: politics, religion, and literature. It does not fully belong to any of them, but it would be difficult to understand by eliminating even a single one of the three. As a consequence, the critic and the reader are never certain that either utopia or dystopia have a full identity of their own or can be regarded as autonomous species. One of the main roots of utopia is found in the generic tradition of the pastoral and the idyll. Dystopia in turn calls from the world of satire and of the grotesque. Thus, almost immediately the question arises whether, and, if so, to what extent, these two can or should be regarded as autonomous branches of fiction.

Utopian works, usually facing toward the past rather than the future, were frequent in Classical Antiquity (Greek and Latin), as well as in religious/mythological/literary works of Ancient Mideastern cultures. Hesiod's *Works and Days* (c. 700 BC) and a long string of authors from Pindar to Diodorus Siculus (5th century-1st century BC) refer to both the Elysian Fields, the Golden Age ("illo tempore" in the felicitous phrase disseminated by Mircea Eliade), and the Blessed Isles. Plato's *Republic* and his *Laws* contain significant utopian elements. The Biblical Garden of Eden had its counterpart in the Sumerian *Enmerkar* (4th millennium BC) and in the widely known *Gilgamesh* (2nd millennium BC), later in sections of the *Arabian Nights* .

The emergence of Christianity coincided with (and was succeeded by) a remarkable abundance of apocalyptic writings (Jewish, Gnostic, Mideastern) the common feature of which was precisely the connection of the remote (mythical?) past with the radical change of the future. Specifically inside Christianity the expectation of a prompt return of the Messiah and the subsequent transfiguration of the cosmos was a mode of interpretation that was exceptionally powerful and durable. It led to formidable utopian movements, generally surging out of the lower and less educated or less affluent classes. These began immediately, already during the 1st century AD and where thereafter transferred from the Mideast to the West. Some of the latter took a purely narrative form: thus the "Schlaraffenland", "land of cockaygne" and their equivalents in other languages and countries during the Middle Ages. Others took theoretical forms: the constitution of the mendicant orders of the Franciscans and of the Dominicans (whose origins indicated strong features of utopianism) in the early Middle Ages (not to speak of less structured movements such as millenarianism or the "flagellants", to mention just a few), or the writings of the "Marx of the Middle Ages", Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202), or, for that matter, of their female utopian equivalent, Christine de Pizan (c. 1364-c.1431). Some were violently suppressed such as the Albigensians, others, like the above-mentioned mendicant orders could be captured and integrated in the mainstream of Christianity. Finally others turned to physical action, in the sense that they tried to bring about or accelerate an event that was supposed to happen in any case. Thus utopianism was one of the complex motivations of the Crusades, as well as of diverse peasant revolts: John Ball in England (1381), Jan Huss (1412-1415) in Bohemia, or Thomas Muntzer(1488-1525) in the Rhineland.

These mostly populist and lower-class movements of the Medieval period were replaced beginning with the late 15th century by much more rationalist and indeed aristocratic variants, as expressed in the writings of Campanella, Morus, Bacon, Margaret Cavendish (the Duchess of Newcastle) and a number of other luminaries. Architectural utopias became fashionable along with the beginnings of scientific-technical utopias. From a literary point of view it is interesting that such authors strove hard to provide some kind of narrative framework to their "scenarios", while remaining, on the whole, primarily descriptive. But if we want to look at them as remote ancestors of Kafka and of other modernists and post-modernists than, taken together, they constitute a remarkable example of continuity and durability.

Despite the robust presence of such writings, it is only during and after the Romantic Age that we notice a genuine turning point. This was due to two rather different causes. One was the often adduced explosive informational increase and the more and more obvious inability of more and more people to handle it. Of course the implication was that the "march

of history" itself was speeded up or seemed to be speeded up. Therefore what could be regarded as "remote future", armchair reverie, "gemutlich" discussion, suddenly became or seemed to become an urgent matter, a description of the present or of the near future. Thus both utopia and the fear and doubt about utopia (dystopia) became matters of vigorous topicality.

The second was the Romantic revaluation of fantasy as one of the key human features and faculties, equal in dignity with reason or with virtue. From a literary point of view fantasy became highly important, a permanent presence in writing and in critical discourse.

Likewise there were two main consequences. The first of these was the advent of science-fiction as an autonomous genre. Conventionally we consider the publication of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) as the cornerstone or fountainhead of the genre. This is not entirely true, in the sense that, already works such as Sir Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, sundry fictions by Restif de la Bretonne and others might equally well be considered precursors of "science-fiction". Nevertheless the clear-cut literary nature of Frankenstein gives it well-deserved prominence, together with the way in which philosophical, technical-scientific, and social issues are masterfully interwoven in the clearly literary mode. Last but not least is the fact that Frankenstein clearly outlines a central issue of any later piece of science-fiction: the dialectic of the utopian and the dystopian, the multiple conflicts between the good, the doubtful, and the evil prepared by tempestuous future evolutions. Frankenstein was surrounded, needless to add, by multiple contemporary Romantic works (the short-stories and novels of E.T.A. Hoffmann are a good example) in which the imaginary or oneiric and the technical seemed to collaborate.

The second consequence was the fact that, owing to the renewed legitimacy of imagination, works of utopian and dystopian origin could in turn feel a freedom of full expression. Indeed, what we see in the 19th century, from Edgar Allan Poe and Lord Bulwer-Lytton to Jules Verne and H.G.Wells (and many others, not least among them the strongly religious Lord of the World (1907) by R. H. Benson, or Vladimir Solovyov's 1900 Story of the Antichrist) is precisely this resort to the powers of phantasy in order to enrich the mere skeletons or "scenarios" on which, as I said, utopian writing had relied primarily until then. Edward Bellamy's influential Looking Backward (1889) also belongs here, as does the much later and more complex Glasperlenspiel of Hermann Hesse.

We have to wait for the 20th century in order to observe how utopian writing gradually turns into dystopian writing. Works such as Karel Capek's RUR (1920), Evgeny Zamyatin's We (1927, first edition), Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932), George Orwell's 1984 (1949), Anthony Burgess' The Wanting Seed (1962), Kingsley Amis' Russian Hide-and-Seek (1980) and perhaps also the same author's counter-historical The Alteration (1976), Ernst Junger's Glaserne Bienen (1957) and to some extent Heliopolis (1949), Vladimir Nabokov's Invitation to *a* Beheading (1938) and particularly the same's Bend Sinister (1947), Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1986) or her Oryx and Cracker (2003) and many others ought to be mentioned here. It is here, as I hope to show, that we can find a real connection with many and major anthropofugal writings, not only those of Franz Kafka but also those of Jorge Luis Borges, Julien Gracq, Eugene Ionesco, or Dino Buzzatti.

We discover thus a dense network of works that in a Cassandra-like voice signal the approach or the arrival of a dangerous, undesirable, and ultimately anti-human type of future, even when some of them suggest happier alternative scenarios. These utopian/dystopian works also explore various modes of possible survival for the truly human individual, with various options, tragic, comic, or ambiguous. There can be not the slightest doubt that we have a prominent and convincing situation in which the innovative and "overthrowing" impulse is just the flip side of an important mode of stabilization and of genuine, tenacious, identity.

How is the work of Franz Kafka inserted in this dystopian mode of writing? First, by the complexity (not to say ambiguity) of the referential level. Second we can think of its connection and analogy with Alfred Kubin. Third we can bring up the issue of descriptiveness as related (again, in a network of dialectical complexity) with the option for fictional narrativity.

To begin with the first, it should be underlined that in most of the dystopian works enumerated the realistic referential level is complex and ambiguous. Thus Huxley seems to attack primarily the capitalist-liberal system, but features of totalitarianism abound in his above-mentioned book (e.g. there is a kind of "central committee" etc). Orwell deals apparently in a straightforward mode with a potential scenario of Communist domination. Yet Burgess' witty and perceptive 1985 also indicates that many of the book's most vividly realistic features are borrowed from the world of England and from the BBC subculture as these appeared at the end of the 1940s. Nabokov's Bend Sinister is founded on an exquisitely careful balance between the world of Nazism and that of Communism. Likewise, Ernst Junger in the above-mentioned narratives, as well as in features of other two remarkable works (Auf den Marmorklippen, and Eumeswil) alludes to a dangerous future in which right-wing, left-wing and centrist forms of totalitarianism seem to blend easily. Atwood's Handmaid's Tale speaks about a potential right-wing theocratic regime in North America, but its concrete details are borrowed from the actually existing Communist regime in Romania at the time of the novel's writing and publication. Even more strikingly, Burgess' The Wanting Seed depicts a state of affairs where two dystopian regimes succeed and replace each other cyclically: one leftist and "politically correct", the other authoritarian conservative and militarist. In the same author's famous Clockwork Orange the two "opposed" dystopian regimes are depicted in full synthesis, all the way to the imaginary language spoken.

A number of critics (including Adorno and von Lukacs) have already noted the dystopian character of some key Kafkian writings (see also the important essay of Soring). However, their judgment that Kafka was predicting fascism is reductive or incomplete, in my opinion. Why? Because Central European Nazi regimes usually had a wolf-like ferocity, they acted by sudden predatory raids, by unexpected and feral violence. This makes them rather different from the kind of evil depicted or suggested by Kafka. His narratives present many more analogies to Communism and to its social procedures, a point that has been rarely made, but one that is confirmed by the constant adversity of Classical Marxists (such as von Lukacs, although not that of the "reformist" Marxists, like Benjamin, Adorno, Fischer or Garaudy) against the Prague writer.(Significant is also the hostility of the Soviet and of the so-called "DDR"-critics against Kafka; a short overview in Binder II,808-810, 452, 426). What goes on in most of Kafka's stories is that he can obviously refer only to his contemporary socio-

historical environment. However, with the fine intuition and powerful imagination of the truly major writer he can sense *inside* this state of affairs, one still located within the borders of normality, the outlines of a new kind of evil. Obviously, like the many dystopian authors enumerated above, Kafka deals with totalitarian aspects that are common to different practical systems. In saying this, we admit implicitly that a multitude of concrete details by which this totalitarian danger is presented to the reader are similar to the practices of Communism. In any case, how do we explain these analogies? The structural stylistics of the stories offer some good clues. With laser-like precision Franz Kafka distinguishes the growth of the new, emerging society out of the one already existing. There is a narrative dynamic that ensures transitions from the mimetic to the authoritarian to the totalitarian. Kafka was able to intuit such transitions and distinctions even without the theoretical support of earlier or later theoreticians such as Benjamin Constant, Hannah Arendt, or Jeanne Kirkpatrick.

So far we have talked about authors that were mostly not contemporary with Kafka. Others, such as Meyrink were contemporary and are related in their thematics. Of these, as I said, I choose to underline the function and nature of Alfred Kubin, as expressed particularly in his novel Die andere Seite (1909).

Perhaps a few words of introduction would be useful for many readers. The public at large will know that Kubin was a photographer and an illustrator and drawer; he is usually grouped with the Expressionist movement, although his emphasis on the fantastic and the nightmarish places him in the tradition of Callot, Piranesi, Fuseli and E.T.A. Hoffmann. His prose-work is limited, about half of it is constituted of memoirs and biographical material; in any case it did not achieve wide popularity. Nevertheless, I believe that at least Die andere Seite is the peer of Kafka's writings in quality and structural similarity. Like his contemporary (the two were acquainted), Kubin writes well before the installation of totalitarian systems, but describes their effects upon human beings equally well. The subject of his novel (as that of most dystopian works) is relatively simple. A rich visionary, by the name of Claus Patera ("pater" being, obviously, the Latin for "father") decides to construct in a region remote from Europe (an imaginary Central Asia) a perfect and happy city ("Perle"), a "dream realm" ("Traumreich") He attracts the inhabitants by advertising, but sends pointedly an emissary to a former middle-school colleague in order to invite the colleague and his wife to emigrate and join the currently 12,000 inhabitants in the perfect city, one which, unlike most dystopian constructions, but not unlike Kafka's visions, looks not towards the future, but rather towards the past: it rejects any signs of modernity. Lavish travel expenses to the city of Perle are included.

The city proves to be deeply disappointing. It is seedy, poverty-stricken, pervaded by fear and uncertainty. The neighborhoods differ from each other to the point of hostility. The narrator finds with difficulty a modest job with a newspaper, his wife dies partly out of psychological reasons, departure proves difficult, if not impossible, the great leader Patera is impossible to reach directly. The arrival of a rich, enterprising, but ruthless American, Hercules Bell, coincides with acts of violence, epidemics, explosions, arson and finally outright revolution. The American, who presents some ambiguous parallels with Lucifer, is clearly engaged in a sort of mysterious power-struggle with Patera, during which they they oneirically seem to merge into each other. Patera appears sometimes as a giant, sometimes as

an old, weak and tired dwarf. European troops intervene (led by the Russian general Rudinoff) and complete the downfall of the dream-empire. To increase the universal incongruity the narrator weeps bitterly over the collapse and has to undergo therapeutic treatment upon his return to the "normal " world.

Even this very short presentation indicates, I think, quite clearly, the similarities between Alfred Kubin and Franz Kafka which have been less often noticed. (See however Neuhauser, Lemaire, and Cersowsky; before them Achleitner)

The third of the points that deserves to be discussed here is that there are some apparent differences between utopian/dystopian writing and Kafka's oeuvre (in particular works such as Der Prozess and Das Schloss) - specifically in that the latter is apparently not descriptive, or systematic. However I do not find this conclusive enough. On the one hand, there do exist a number of dystopian productions (for instance those of Burgess, Junger, and others) that are primarily narrative, not descriptive. On the other hand, and more important in my view, the reader of Kafka's above-mentioned texts does find in them enough indications for imagining a constitutive framework. Thus, unquestionably, Das Schloss is placed in an alternative world. This world has a number of features, such as an unfathomable series of power strata. Likewise, authority is distributed in strange and unpredictable ways, the position and status of the land-surveyor and of his assistants changes several times, the psychology of the villagers undergoes unexpected modifications, the flow of time is different from the regular one, society seems to be often matriarchal (see Boa in Preece, 69-70). All these taken together constitute a rather convincing image of a dystopian realm.

Quite similar, but even more emphatic is the dystopia in Der Prozess . There, we discover gradually the hidden universe, which step by step takes over and swallows the normal world. The very title of the book is false in as far as we find everything and anything in it except for an actual trial. There are two levels of judicial procedure: one habitual and rule-directed, the other secretive and devoid of any rules. Banal and socially irrelevant types acquire a tremendous importance and weight: run-of-the-mill lawyers and the servant-maid of at least one of them, a bizarre portrait-painter, unexpected neighbors. The agents of the law behave by turn as threatening thugs and as grovelling serfs. Accusations, indictments, even sentencings are hidden from the principals to whom they apply. The slowly uncovered world is dangerous and evil. Inside it sexuality is used as bribe and as punishment. Perhaps the most striking feature is the "upside-down" nature of the venues: filthy attics, shabby buildings, musty corridors, seedy rooms, a mixture of the intimate (linen-washing rooms and the like) and of the official. Ambiguous religious messages intervene (as in the penultimate chapter). Together these constitute, even more clearly than in Das Schloss the structure of a dystopian society.

In passing, I will make some observations on two other works by Kafka that are both relevant for the issue of his dystopian interests. One of them is obviously the short-story In der Strafkolonie with its mercilessly sadistic tone. If indeed Kafka's descriptions there were inspired, at least partly, by the cruel repression of the Herrero tribe in the Southwest-African colonial possessions of Germany, then we do have a highly interesting example of Kafka's processual dynamics from the mimetic to the present outline and finally to the futuristic. The other is the novel Amerika. As shown by Sokel and by Loose, among others, this novel is not a "hard-line" dystopia. Nevertheless, the general impression of the reader is one of unease and danger, and we can recognize some specific Kafkian techniques, in chapters such as the

famous one on the "stoker" and in the episode of Karl's summary and unjust dismissal from his hotel job. Both indicate vaguely but with some clarity the kind of world more fully depicted in the Prozess.

II

I would now like to turn to the fantastic, in as far as it is the wider contextual circle of the dystopian. This has also the advantage, as part of my argument, that Kafka's fantastic is the foundation for the writer's involvement with dystopia: there are similarities of structure that can be easily recognized.

To be sure, many have paid close attention to the presence of the fantastic in Kafka's writings.(Binder, II, 119-121, 331-3). A simple and very good classification is to be found in the short work of the Peruvian critic Miguel Gutierrez. He distinguishes four kinds of Kafkian phantastic: narrations on metamorphosis (besides Die Verwandlung, also Ein Bericht fur eine Akademie, Der neue Advokat), narrations on strange animals or such as are in strange relations with the humans (Das Schweigen der Sirenen, Eine Kreuzung, Schakale und Araber, and others), narrations of speaking animals (Forschungen eines Hundes, Josefine die Sangerin) and narratives that express the narrator's desire to be turned into inanimate matter (e.g.Prometheus, Die Sorge des Hausvaters, Der Jager Grachus and others). Now as to direct parallels, they were established particularly with his Romantic predecessors such as Kleist (Dittkrist; Binder, I,379; and Oskar Walzel at the very beginnings of Kafka research), ETA Hoffmann (among many others see Wollner), Gogol (Parry and many others), sometimes Dickens, but also major figures like Goethe (Hodin, among others; one should add here the Biedermeier connection through Stifter, Bozena Nemcova and Ludwig Richter – Binder I, 488, I, 516), Dostoyevsky (Binder, I, 464; Poggioli), Tolstoy (a matter already mentioned by early friends such as Brod and Klopstock) in terms of their ideas, Borges (who wrote himself several times on Kafka and stimulated a whole younger Latin-American generation, including Lezama Lima, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and others; see among numerous studies, Garavito, also Caeiro in Binder, II, 705-721), all the way to unexpected figures, like Hemingway (Gordon)

Critics presented as substitutes of the fantastic what were in fact for Kafka, I believe, just connecting and mediating elements, such as the grotesque (Kassel), the oneiric (Kassel, 31-34, Binder, II, 49), the surrealistic (Binder, II, 681-2) or the tragicomic (alternatively the tragic-ironic by Sokel e.g.). I regard this as a kind of back-pedaling in the face of Kafka's rather specific discourse of the fantastic. Intelligently, it has been pointed out that Kafka was not primarily an author of the absurd, but one who depicted the fear of the absurd. (Chaix; also very good Goth on the connection with surrealism, and above all the great Oskar Walzel who, already in 1916, fully understood the distinctive features of Kafka's fantastic). The fact is that much more often critics and researchers have concentrated on dimensions such as psychology, existentialism, religion and myth, issues of identity (individual or communitarian) inside Kafka's work.

Perhaps the explanation is that Kafka exerts with tremendous talent and virtuosity a somewhat different method and sort of fantasy than we usually encounter in earlier literary

writings. In a simplified way, we might distinguish two main directions of costumary literary fantasy. The first is the depiction of a completely alternative world, that is to say one in which our habitual rules and natural or social laws, as well as the ordinary physical forms and psychological principles are no longer valid at all (the books of J.R.R. Tolkien might be one example among many). The other is one in which the narrative zig-zags or switches between the natural world and some kind of extra-natural one (this is the case with ETA Hoffmann to take one instance among many others possible, particularly among Romantic writers).

By contrast Kafka envisages a fantastic that wakens *inside* normality and grows slowly, stealthily, we might say slyly, yet in such a way that it cannot be stopped. It is a fantastic of the interior, rather than of the exterior, a fantastic that is almost always maleficient, parasyitical and destructive, but eats normality or reality from the inside out. To repeat, this fantastic grows smoothly inside the ordinary and the predictable, horror and the absurd emerge eventually, often with terrible and tragic results. Opposition to this evolution is usually existent, but seems entirely futile. The best and fullest example is provided in Der Prozess (as indicated above), but it can also be seen in Das Schloss and even in Die Verwandlung (though it is slightly different there, since the whole story begins with the powerful strike of the unexpected metamorphosis; nevertheless, even in this short story this relentless internal progress can be recognized, accompanied by rather passive despair). This specific way of treating the fantastic explains, in a sense, and certainly provides an underpinning of Kafka's handling of the dystopian.

As a corollary, the following deserves some attention. The influence of Kafka's mode of using the fantastic should not be examined only when it is direct and immediate, rather it should be seen sometimes under the form of a successive series of connecting links. A friend and admirer such as Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando became a key figure in the 20th century Neo-Baroque movement in Austrian fiction. He and others undoubtedly accepted some Kafkian influences, although he was in other ways he was quite different from Kafka. Dino Buzzati and Julien Gracq were perhaps less influenced directly by Kafka, and rather by Borges (at least the former). Nevertheless they are rightly seen as Kafkian descendants. Hermann Kasack's Die Stadt hinter dem Strom of 1946 might also be described as the work of a talented disciple. Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco (to some extent Robbe-Grillet, cf. Binder II, 687, 699, 702) are also "indirect" Kafkians; we can recognize extremely powerful analogies with Kafka in their writings: the loss of the individual, the person's domination by and crushing under impersonal forces, the tragicomic, the dystopian echoes and numerous others. More generally, the movement that came to be described as "magical realism" (I mentioned the names of a few noted South Americans before) is deeply indebted to Kafka's mode of dealing with the fantastic. I will dwell however in some more detail precisely on two authors who are relatively distant from Kafka, but who would have been, I believe, impossible without his pioneering work.

Jean Raspail was born in 1925 and he was an avid globe-trotter, perhaps he could be described as an explorer. His orientation was that of a staunch old-line Catholic and conservative royalist. His main works are pessimistic and pervaded with uncertainties and emotional regret. In this short sketch he might be better characterized by pointing to similarities with other French writers of the 20th century such as Julien Gracq and Michel Tournier. We are however reminded of Kafka also, when we look at the more fantastic among

his numerous works. One of Raspail's novels deals with the past and the potential future of Catholic Christianity. (L'Anneau du pecheur 1995) Another, even more openly fantastic is a scenario of the collapse of Europe under the weight of sudden, aggressive "third-world" immigration (Le Camp des saints 1973) . The one that I would like to stop and briefly examine here is called Septentrion. It was published in 1979. The subject is quite simple on the face of it. An unnamed country is, for unnamed reasons, taken over by a faceless dictatorship. All its authorities, indeed all its citizens, seem now to be called "Rudeau" (with all the implications of grossness and brutality the name carries). About three dozen dissidents manage to capture a princely train that they set moving toward a mythical "North". (It should be said that this idea of a tiny remnant after or during a general disaster is a *topos* in Raspail's prose: we encounter it in Camp des saints , in Sept cavaliers … and elsewhere.) In Septentrion the group is as eclectic as one can imagine. The leader of the group is Kandall Kurtis, a merchant-adventurer , accompanied by his mistress, Clara de Hutte. There is a handful of military (hussars and dragoons) led by the lieutenant Nicolas Suvorov and the police brigadier Werner von Golitz, a priest (Father Serge), the puppet-master Sempronius, two waiters, two locomotive engineers belonging to the Bactrian ethnic minority of the "Ouaks", several children and women (the actress Maria Valera standing out) and sundry others, not least the narrator, a former journalist named himself Rudeau. The country is supposed to be thin and elongated, much like Chile, except that it is situated in the far north. The railway had been constructed by prince Peter II in 1887 and had eight stations from the capital Saint-Basile to the terminus Octoville; however the localities had been abandoned years ago, in 1910, and their inhabitants repatriated to the South, as the journal kept by Otto von Pikkendorff, the military commander of Petroquarto (the 4th station) indicates. The hope of the fugitives is to meet the quasi-mythical forest tribe of the Ouimiats, who might provide them with some help.

The flight proves to be hopeless. The fugitives are pursued relentlessly, attacked, and harassed, or so they have the impression, by either their enemies, or ghostly and death-bringing apparitions, or else by their own "double". Gradually some of them die or disappear, by accident, by aggression, by suicide perhaps, or simple disappearance (as in the case of the children). The Ouimiats are not found, although one train-dweller or the other seems to detect occasionally traces of them. The initial luxurious life on the train gradually wanes: food reserves dwindle, the cruel arctic cold takes over, darkness falls as days become shorter and shorter, living-conditions become more and more precarious. Feelings of pointlessness and despair gradually take over. Ultimately the void of unreality overcomes them. The narrator in the end no longer knows whether he is a madman on a medical train, or a genuine fugitive rebel. (Here the similarity to Kubin is stronger than to Kafka). The documents that conclude the novel might well indicate the former.

The novel is perhaps also inspired by the tragic ending of Admiral A.V. Kolchak, the most talented and honorable of the counter-revolutionary leaders during the Russian civil wars after the Communist revolution. Defeated in Siberia he took refuge with a small band of followers on the Trans-Siberian train and crossed the enormous Asian part of Russia, hotly pursued by the Red Army, before his final defeat and execution. The theme of irremediable defeat, very frequent in Raspail's novels, is gently introduced when the narrator believes he

hears the "hymn of Maximilian" (the brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz-Joseph and haplessly short ruler of Mexico, who ended his life in 1867 in front of Benito Juarez's execution squad). The transition from the real to the imaginary is masterfully achieved by Raspail, and, as I said, it may well have been impossible without the new foundations laid by Kafka in the treatment of the relationship between the real and the fantastic, even though the influence is not direct, but indirect, as indicated above.

To strengthen my case I will also mention here the much younger Romanian fiction- and poetry writer Mircea Cartarescu (b. 1956) The prose experiments of Cartarescu enjoyed a measure of international visibility and interest in France, Spain, Germany, and elsewhere. These included prominently *Nostalgia* (1993) and *Travesti* (1994) in which androgynous, homosexual and trans-gender themes figured prominently, well-embedded in dreamlike and fantastic contexts. However Cartarescu's major prose achievement is the trilogy *Orbitor* ("blinding"), the volumes of which appeared in 1997, 2002, and 2007 under the sub-titles of "the left wing", "the body", and the right-wing. These sub-titles are supposed to suggest the emergence of a butterfly, the over-arching metaphor of the book. The trilogy could be understood as a kind of *Bildungsroman* complete with family-history, depicting the birth of the poet and of his fantasy inside of and using materials drawn from the completely banal and ordinary circumstances in the years of Communist dictatorship and earlier. In the first, as well as in the second volume the narrator describes childhood and adolescence experiences in marginal parts of Bucharest where he lives with his socially modest parents, while the third describes the revolutionary events of Bucharest in 1989 seen through the eyes of a naive teenager. Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the narration is the brilliant way in which it slides tangentially outside reality and back into the most trivial and matter of fact circumstances.

The butterfly from which the subtitles derive grows out of the cocoon, as fantasy does out of reality. Thus for instance both in volume one and two Cartarescu offers detailed depictions of orgiastic scenes in which incest, (suggestions of) cannibalism, and indiscriminate sexuality are unloosed under a quasi-religious sign. Elsewhere (vol. II) the underage narrator goes to the circus where suddenly the acting freaky figures begin to step out of their roles and to engage in monstrous and frightening actions. Likewise, as the child follows the labor of his mother on weaving carpets, the abstract images on the carpets begin to construct themselves into a fantastic, trans-imaginary cosmos. These and numerous other oneiric episodes are seamlessly connected with the child's drab existence and growth in somewhat seedy neighborhoods of the capital city and in rather banal childhood and adolescent activities and interactions with his peers. Additionally Orbitor is suffused with references to scientific (particularly anatomical and physiological) facts that suggest to the reader above all the overwhelming accumulation of information of our contemporaneity.

These two examples will perhaps be sufficient in suggesting that the Kafkian tradition is by now constituting a solid and broad sub-genre in the interior of fantastic literature. It also indicates, in my opinion, the extremely strong connection of the fantastic and the dystopian. For this particular mode of understanding the fantastic, the latter appears not primarily or exclusively as shining hope and superior to reality, but, on the contrary, as nightmarish, frightening , and objectively dangerous - a realm in which not only just the psychological and the symbolic find some release, but one that is an alternative world in itself. We are no

longer talking about a paradisial hope, but about a competing and overlapping kind of reality. The purely philosophical concept of the plurality of worlds gains here a perilous implication, it is an option looming inside the human being, threatening at every moment to supersede in the real world and to smash or replace it altogether: which is in fact what happens in different degrees and modes in post–Kafkian prose writing. Escapism is no longer a possibility, a true level beyond the banalities of day-to-day life, it is no longer the response to the travails and agonies of normal existence, it is, on the contrary, the *worst* possibility, the hellish world that may be expected by those who object too much to reality as it is. The transformation of utopia into dystopia is the opposite of hope. The traditional religious principle of hope as contrary to optimism becomes part of the referential backgrounds in this relatively new tradition. On the one hand paradisial escape is denied, on the other hand the utopian/dystopian project is brought back into the realm of the literary. The reader is thus obliged to admit that the fantastic is not a parallel plane, but an actual facet of reality. There are no decisive frontiers between the two. Reality is never complete without the fantastic, while the fantastic is no longer a successful flight from reality. The two are *complementary faces of an integral whole*, according to the authors discussed - a concept that I consider as quintessentially Kafkian. Evil and good, ugly and beautiful are, from this point of view equally indispensable for existence on the one hand, and for our understanding on it, on the other. Implicitly, reality become multiplicity, the universe – a multiverse. The mission of the writer is to plunge into this kind of plurality and to explore it as deeply and seriously as possible.

Nothing could be more persuasive than this. On the one hand, the innovative and convulsive turns out to be inscribed in a matrix of traditions (past, present, and ulterior) and constitute itself into an element of solidity although deriving from fluid and aerial forces. On the other hand, elements and events that were extremely "subversive' and thus part and parcel of the "whirlwind" environment of disturbance and instability, turns to function as kind of sturdy critique of the environment with which it had been solidary and which it was supposed to express and advocate.

III

Attempts to deal with a "multicultural Kafka" have often been unfounded and far-fetched. The theories of Homi Bhaba or Mary Louise Pratt were applied (Goebel **B**) after a tortured attempt to show that some Kafkian works (notably In der Strafkolonie or The Chinese Wall) were direct political allegories dealing with colonialism. We have to tread lightly when we speak about Kafka's political views in a stricter sense. There are many reports of Kafka's closeness to anarchist circles, some of them credible, some of them less so (Binder I, 361-368). These should not be ignored. However other elements of Kafka's *Weltanschauung* should not be overlooked either. Among these is his active involvement as a college student with the Brentano circle (Binder, I, 286 –9), which had a conservative underpinning, philosophically speaking. His respect or admiration for Goethe and Tolstoy are also factors to be considered. Kafka was actually a rather voracious reader and one with a well-rounded education. That is why a certain "universal" context is possible and desirable in understanding

his work. The fantastic, as outlined in my previous section is the best path for entering into a speculation on Kafka's connections with non-Western literatures.

The most efficient strategy is to look at Kafka's narrative techniques and to compare them to those of universal extra-Western figures. Thus Kafka's influence upon Jorge Luis Borges is sufficiently well known. We have also mentioned briefly what we called the "indirect" influence upon Gabriel Garcia Marquez, particularly in novels such as A Hundred Years of Solitude and The Death of the Patriarch ,where the fantastic and the real coexist and co-inhabit the same body of facts. (cf e.g. Gutierrez, 189-190)

However nobody has observed, I believe, some interesting analogies with the major Chinese classical novel The Pilgrimage to the West. (I want to note here that I do not plan to handle in any detail the matter of Kafka's reception in other cultures; see e.g. Ren Weidong). This somewhat picaresque epic describes the expedition of a venerable scholar to the "West" (which we call nowadays the Mideast) in order to recuperate some ancient spiritual documents. Being of a meek, credulous, peaceful, and studious temperament, Master Tripitaka could not have pursued his quest without help. He finds as disciples and supporters three grotesque and morally ambiguous, but resourceful characters, half-human, half-monstrous, chiefly the "stone monkey". These are the peers and the appropriate matches of the adversaries encountered along the way. These enemies present themselves more often than not as "normal" inhabitants of the earth - peasants, monks, local lords, old women – but soon turn into monstrous figures, super-human in power and capacity, often local or indigenous natural half-deities. The Pilgrimage to the West is an inextricable combination of the mythical and the ordinary, a continuous stepping in and out from the fantastic to the mundane and back. I am firmly convinced that a closer examination would prove convincingly that there are some interesting similarities with Kafka's techniques of writing and that the reception effects upon the reader offer surprising parallels. These appear to be all founded upon the way in which the extra-normal and the shocking are embedded and hidden inside the purely natural.

The same is true, in my opinion, of other "third-world" writings, beyond Marquez or other South Americans. One more name will therefore suffice. It is that of Amos Tutuola (of course other Nigerian writers, e.g. Wole Soyinka might be brought up). In Tutuola's main masterpiece which I regard in some ways (e.g. richness of unbridled fantasy and stunning variety of imagery) superior to and carrying more impact than even the works of the German Romantics we recognize certain narrative techniques that could be fruitfully compared to those of Franz Kafka. Again we have a certain quest and again the main character encounters a world that has some of the features of the natural and real world, closely combined with forms of existence that are extra-natural; the adventures are based on the need of the characters to adapt to this unusually hybrid world.

IV

There is little need for a detailed conclusion. I tried to bring together some new elements with some that have already been noticed by researchers or attentive readers. My line of argument is that Kafka is not primarily or exclusively an explosive "avant-garde" writer, although he often functioned in this way. He is actually well inscribed in a tradition

and in circles after circles of surrounding contexts. Kafka is more valuable when we look at him in his multiple ties and connections. If we truly want to consider Kafka a writer of a somewhat universal appeal, and not merely a provincial product of a certain time and place than we must look carefully at these ties and at these contexts, that is to say at parallels with other writers, movements, techniques. Once we have done this, we realize that at least part of the "post-modernist" chaos is constituted out of an aggregate of identities and of continuities.

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Cioran – Breaking off Identity. A New Beginning

The paper attempts to focus on a deep modification in Cioran's thinking that is simultaneous with his decision of writing only in French. In this moment of linguistic conversion a genuine "identity rupture", also marked by a slight change of his name: from Emil Cioran to E.M. Cioran. In order to illustrate correctly this moment the author analyzes thematically the first two books published by Cioran in France: Tratat de descompunere and Silogismele amărăciunii.

After the literary work of his youth, the so-called "Cioran's second birth" follows (Patrice Bollon), the author starting to write only in French. This is not only an act of abandoning oneself and abandoning a past that he wanted to forget forever. There is also a profound existential change, in the quest for the real identity – always deeply hurt and put to trial – in a method of expression absolutely *other*, that signifies for him a new difficulty and a new exigency of being. Beyond the tragedy of adopting a foreign language at the age of 37 ("*linguistic commotion"* as Gabriel Liiceanu calls it), it is the exact inner impulse that he needed that moment in order to surpass a crisis that seemed insuperable. Reaching a period of surfeit according to the old method of thinking, Cioran was conscious that only through another language "one can gather strength, can renew". When he tried in vain to translate Mallarmé's poetry, he came up against the expressive limits of Romanian language. Cioran chooses the French language after a frenzied five years specialization in English and in spite of the fact that he mastered German perfectly, that he had learnt as a pupil in Sibiu. That was a normal thing keeping in mind that he was living in Pascal and Montaigne's France in the past ten years and decided that he would never leave it. This moment meant breaking off identity and intellectual:

"Yes, that was the moment when I began to write *Précis* and I soon realize it is a very difficult experience. One can change the language in the 20'ies, but at 35-36 years old that I had … I thought I knew French perfectly and it was then when I realized I didn't. But I didn't give up. I knew I was not coming back to Romania again. And I realize that, if one really wants to change the language, he/she has to give up his/her mother language. This is a fundamental thing. Otherwise it doesn't work. One cannot keep on speaking Romanian and writing French. It is an incompatibility. Passing to another language can be done only by giving up one's own language. One has to accept this sacrifice."[1]

It was a sacrifice with happy endings that soon appeared. Now on Cioran not only writes in a new language but begins to write *differently* – totally differently from his former writings. Even the Romanian translations of his French books, from *Tratat de descompunere* (*A Short History of Decay*) to *Mărturisiri şi anateme* (*Anathemas and Admirations*) show this difference. We do not necessarily refer to the style. If there is a problem regarding Cioran's style, this has no direct link to the language the philosopher uses. It is more a question of

[1] Gabriel Liiceanu, *Itinerariile unei vieţi: E. M. Cioran urmat de Apocalipsa după Cioran (Ultimul interviu)*, ed. a II-a, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, p. 94.

temperament and the intensity of ideas. The intensity remains the same, but the temperament disciplines itself in the new method of expression. Cioran admits that he adopted a language that did not fit him at all from a temperamental point of view (a language for lawyers and logicians, as he says). But this is the exact thing that totally changed him. It is the time when the fear of ridicule and improvisation increases. He understood that he had to be more cautious and careful to what he says or how he says, in other words to write more accurate: he rewrote four times his first book, the others at least two times. Reaching full maturity, he is more and more afraid of what he – truly – calls "snugness of delirium". There are moments when Cioran begins to speak persistently about himself as the other, showing an extroverted nature. In the long run, the reflexivity relies on a kind of super-ego (the ego's ego, as he says somewhere). It is more like an impersonal ego than a profound one, analyzed by some critics. Furthermore the main issue is "how to escape the absoluteness that represents you?" Convinced that such a change is not entirely possible and also convinced of the failure of philosophy generally speaking (both "the concept" or "the ecstasy" does not seem to him anymore current and the great systems are nothing but "radiant tautologies"), Cioran adopts the method of an "emotional Eleatism", seemed to come from Eminescu's *Glosa*. Especially the aphoristic writing in the first texts published in exile soon brought him the fame of a master, an expert and a remarkable moralist (or "immoralist" as Maurice Nadeau wrote in a review to *Précis de décomposition*). The thinker astonishingly folds on the forces and intuitive energies of the new language that he awakens in a creative way. But he does not have too great illusions. He is aware of the fact that we live in a "pleonastic universe where the questions and the answers are equivalent". No matter which are the themes and the ideas, the instinct of a metaphysician does not leave him. "The emotional Eleatism" corresponds to a method of dense, unmistakable writing: that *écriture* for which only the new language could give prestige. All these point to an author to whom one cannot "put a label". His books keep on being some existential experiences in the right sense of the word. The only urge is to think together with Cioran (and even against him), on a continuous reflection that has as main goal awakening to consciousness. In opposition to the lyricism present in Romanian writings, now one can feel a huge effort of purification and ascesis of language. From a while, the man himself gave those who knew him the impression that he is quasi-timeless[2], as well as his works.

Thus the work in its final form gives the strong impression of a thematic unity. The outstanding *A Short History of Decay* represents a new starting point, but also the concise synthesis of an already formed thinking. The same questions and revelations will be resumed and enhanced forever. But it is useless and this is not Cioran's way to search for an absolute metaphysic principle to arrange them. The allergy to abstractions and concepts taken for granted represents the emotional issue where the work endlessly takes its "food". It would be a mistake to make Cioran a systematic thinker who he thought he wasn't.

Under these circumstances, the thinker does not refuse himself to any comprehensions and rational interpretations, in spite of the fact that we consider difficult to follow him on his own way. At least on a first level of reading, we can identify and describe the main themes and ways of meaning in E.M. Cioran's works. These are circle-like routes, generally

[2] Cf. Patrice Bollon, *Cioran, l' érétique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1997, p. 14 and the next

redundant, but unconventional and always challenging. But we do not cherish illusions: a certain blocking is going to appear as much as we try to avoid it. In its intimate level, Cioran's thinking closes in a tragic space, without any emergence. Because it has no genealogy, it also hasn't the power to regenerate itself and to spread – beyond the already critic point – to other spaces of experience and knowledge. It is part of a horizon of agonizing eschatological expectation. This apocalyptical horizon of the existence beyond the existence and of the history beyond the history represents Cioran's transcendence. The entire self reflexive "poetological" effort takes place in the proximity of the radical evil, in the attempt stricken by a serious heresy to find the being's no return way of access and salvation. Cioran's "negative exercises" do not either take precisely to a place, to a haven, or stop at least for a moment, from their dash and desperate fury.

*

Because we spoke about a new beginning, let's stop a little on Cioran's first books that brought him an unexpected prestige.

Paradoxically the breaking off identity (young Cioran's identity) resumes the old one, that with the philosophy, that was done in dramatic terms "after a personal catastrophe …, loss of sleep". In other words, abandoning philosophy corresponds – especially now – to an overdose of consciousness, but also to a such intense lyricism that overflowed the limits of any knowledge. Young Cioran followed Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, refusing the thinking of a system or prefab concepts. But it is more than a refusal in his attitude; it is a revolt of metaphysic nature. The truth is that he had no choice. He finds himself convicted in front of the inevitable, the experience of useless sounding at the edge of the absoluteness. The themes of his work are themes of vivid thinking, of free existential commitment, an enlightened mind's themes who writes in a simple, natural way, with common simple words, as he used to say. Now, in the new Parisian context, Cioran harshly accuses the excess of technical terms in philosophical reflection. This is not the goal of philosophizing – to fabricate concepts that actually pauperize the spirit. Cioran always speak with a reckless frankness in the name of the lyrical and autobiographic ego, that he cannot ever separate from, not even in his late writings (in spite of the above mentioned impersonal instance: "the ego's ego"). This monologue does not have a beginning or an end; it is a performance of fervours and continuous verbal outbreaks. According to his sayings, it happened that Cioran wrote many books not only one.

This way of thinking, in a continuous ebb and flow makes the identification of themes difficult. However, there are some successful attempts of thematic analysis of Cioran's writings. According to Simona Modreanu, Cioran's fundamental themes are structured on "two great semantic fields – the divine and the human – although their interferences are permanent and multiple"[3]. Among all the following stand out: obsession of the essential (a super theme), Gnosis and the Bad Demiurge, Time and Falling into History, the issue of suicide, melancholy ("time becomes sensitiveness"), musical ecstasy, the ego's relations to the world ("the art of dual personality"). It is not a complete description, we can add many more. Specific for Cioran's lack of categorial thinking, there is a fluctuation of reflection around some obsessions that became real constants of the spirit from book to book. These

[3] Simona Modreanu, *Cioran*, Oxus, Paris, 2003, p. 32 and the next

metaphysic constants – sort of inborn ideas of emotional nature – can also be called themes; it is not their existence that counts, but the strain they bring about: the so called devastating "Cioran effect" some exegetes speak about[4].

In order to make things easier, we will say that Cioran's every book is organized around a dominant theme. In *A Short History of Decay*, beyond the celebration of "breaking off philosophy", the negative frenzy reaches all the forms of existence. The book should have been entitled – the author says – *Exerciţii negative (Negative exercises)*. Cioran's nihilist enthusiasm thus arrives to new extreme solutions. The theme of decline and temporal dissolution corresponds to a paradoxical principle of universal decreation, according to which the laws of life "are generated by decomposition". This irreversible process culminates in apocalypse. All the existent ideologies, doctrines and religions (some "blood-stained farces") are subdued to a merciless test of disillusion. Awakening to consciousness and the theme of lucidity keep up this, however, deceptive exercise of "defascination" as it will be called in another book. The man himself is seen as a supreme expression of the idea of exhaustion. This has to perpetuate his "calling to tiredness" and dramatic inner tearing "into nothingness or into the ridicule of being alive". Nothing good waits for him in the future, he is a human being convicted to failure: "Man adventured outside the predestined roads, outside the instincts and he ended up in a blind alley. He burnt the stages … in order to catch up with the end; animal without a future, got stuck in his own ideal, get lost in his own game. Because he wanted to surpass ceaselessly, he stood stock-still; he has nothing to do but to summarize his follies, to expiate them and to do some more …" A whole chapter is dedicated to the "faces of decline", another to the "second hand thinker", obsessed by the "holiness and grimaces of the Absoluteness" (the title of a chapter) till the grotesque (a metaphysic grotesque). All these are nothing but variations on the same theme, easy to be traced from the first to the last page of the book: the theme of the world's decomposition and its ephemeral nature.

"The anatomy of decomposition", as Ion Dur called it, does not finish together with the *Treatise* dedicated to it. Here the principle of disintegration was only the subject of an ample self reflexive theme, in a more rigorous way than in other writings. In one way or another, the obsession of decomposing the Meaning will appear in Cioran's next books. In *Silogismele amărăciunii* (*All Gall is Divided*) one can notice a change in register and tonality of ideas. Now the ontological issue of language and especially the style is in the foreground: adopting the aphorism as a genre of discourse and method of knowledge. This is how an exegete tries to define this new "technique of survival": "Syllogisms are conclusions that listen to deductive method; they are in fact conclusive figures that infer the particular from the general. In Cioran's work there are statements of aphoristic concision, always serious and somber, with paradoxical wordings that limit themselves to a single sentence, rarely more than three"[5]. The lack of echoes at the publishing of this book warns Cioran that he is in a "blind alley". The aphorisms bring a dense thinking, but also a relaxing feeling of exhaustion and end. In its essence, bitterness is a form of surfeit. It seems that *All Gall is Divided* (1952)

[4] Ion Dur, *Hârtia de turnesol. Generaţia '30*, vol. 1, *Emil Cioran - inedit. Teme pentru acasă*, Saeculum, 2000, p. 203 and the next

[5] Richard Reschika, *Introducere în opera lui Cioran*, trad. de Viorica Nişcov, Editura Saeculum I.O., Bucureşti, 1998, p. 56.

comes too early for what the others expect from Cioran, after a fulminating and so promising "début" with *Précis*. Jean Rostand was right in his review: "This book will not be understood"[6]. Its main merit is that it establishes the state of spirit in Cioran's work. The theme of decline appears again, with influences from Spengler and Freud: "One thousand years of wars strengthened the West; one thousand years of <psychology> brought it at the end of the abyss". Even more dramatic is the separation from Nietzsche, although the author self ironically mimics respect: "Adolescence indulges in juggling with the attitudes, and at the philosophers it likes the side of rope walker: at Nietzsche we liked Zarathustra, his pose, his antics of a mystic buffoon, a real *jumble of peaks* …" Some other obsessions assumed as themes of reflection: suicide, the intellectual's decline (that is the supreme decline of the man), ambiguity of faith ("Without God everything is nothingness. And God? The supreme nothingness."), the issue of religion in modernity ("Now there are only theories … Religion boycotts faith"), sexuality, music – to come in the end to the "sources of the vacuum". Everywhere there is a bitter disillusioned irony, but with a tragic mysterious mainspring. The circle of loneliness becomes "circle of loneliness" (an entire chapter) through a paradoxical play on words, suggesting a possible method of intensifying the tragic through irony. Only apparently the register of these syllogisms is a minor, game-like one – probably because of the poetic charm induced by the aphoristic expression and "the easy weapon of paradox" (that once was used by the saints – Cioran defends himself). In an aphorism it is said that "the game of the truths should be governed by reasons of *euphony*". This means that "style" and truth are the same. This is the reason why the thematic analysis at this level does not have a special significance: the themes are melting in the dominant state of spirit, following an attenuation of despair and fright through conversion into bitterness, doubts and aesthetic relativism[7]. The most substantial chapters, "The West" and "The Whirl of the History", the only ones more coherent from a thematic point of view, are exceptions. They combine the aphoristic form of the discourse with the essayistic one.

The following books - *Ispita de a exista, Istorie şi utopie, Căderea în timp* (*The Temptation to Exist, History and Utopia, The Fall into Time*) are essays. This time the themes are clearer and obviously outlined. The tendency towards objectivity is even more obvious although *The Temptation to Exist* begins in a "masked" monologue, "to think against yourself" – or maybe exactly because of this. Now Cioran wants to be "on the peaks of indifference" or the Taoist way of giving up, but *the passionate* who always survives does not leave him any moment of tranquility. He invokes the great masters in the "art of thinking against themselves, Nietzsche, Baudelaire and Dostoevsky". But we shall speak about these at some other time.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Cf. Cioran, *Silogismele amărăciunii*, trad. din lb. franceză de Nicolae Bârna, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1992, p. 119.

However we shall not put an end to this before coming back to a fundamental theme in *Treatise* – "the faces of decline" – that defines one of the constants in Cioran's thinking and announces again the great theme of nihilism where Cioran's reflection gradually plunges[8].

The truth is that the issue of decline was a constant obsession for the Romanian-French biting thinker and moralist; thus we can find equivalent reflections in all his books. Cioran's nihilism often took extreme aspects. He was not accidentally invited to contribute with a text, *La Clef de l'Abîme* to the famous *Apocalypse*, published in Paris, 1960. In the text of *Treatise* the register of the ideas seems well-balanced, and the apocalyptic enthusiasm is under control. Rarely does he swell exceedingly: "I only like things rushing and crumbling, the fire that arouses and pines them away. The long standing world exasperates me; its birth and death delights me".

Cioran defines the decline in terms that remind Nietzsche's ideas about "decline" and "modernity". Nietzsche always showed a special interest in "the symptoms of decline", obvious in the conflict between Christian morality and existence without laws and norms. "Morality denies life" he says. Nietzsche believes that "trans-essential values" are not the real values, but only some semblances of these. Man has a great ability to self cheat / self deceive as he gradually looses his will of living. For him, Wagner – a "modern Cagliostro" – is "the great decadent" and Socrates "the first decadent" (as an involuntary forerunner of Christianity). But he admits that decline is a reality, the other face of human evolution. He says about himself, in *Ecce Homo*, that he is "a decadent and a beginning at the same time" and somewhere else: "a decadent who defeated himself". For Nietzsche modernity is in itself a decline. It inherits the spirit of resentment, the hostility towards life from the Christianity. Modernity is anti-Christian only at the surface.

Cioran has similar opinions. He starts from the critique of Alexandrianism, with examples from old civilizations, especially the Roman, but he also insistently and caustically refers to twilight of modern European values. In his eyes the phenomenon takes metaphysic proportions as the decline seemed to infest the root of life itself. The conscience falsifies the instincts and the reign of lucidity ends in a bad way for the human being, in *abstraction* and *complexes* of all types. Moreover, in modern times, one of the most absurd aspects of nihilism appeared: "the nihilism of gorging" by favouring the pleasure of the senses too much. The human being has an inborn propensity to tiredness more than the species that he belongs to and that he unconsciously betrays. He is a hopelessly ill person. The entire European man's route is an involution from "*Iliad* to psychopathology". The appearance and triumph of Christianity enhanced more and more the separation between life and spirit. Harsh words, that we almost could not dare to write, are addressed to Holy Fathers of the Church or to emperor Justinian who ordered to close the Philosophic School in Athens: "It is the most painful moment in the history of Doubt". Cioran mostly deplores the absence of any transcendent or immanent meaning in history and he sadly reveals only "the mingling between waltz and slaughter-house that makes and stimulates its becoming". The moralist's last verdict leaves no possibility of salvation: "We are more rotten than every era, more depraved than any empire". The future will be the same: "future itself is a cemetery, a virtual cemetery, as everything that

[8] Cioran, *Tratat de descompunere*, în românește de Irina Mavrodin, Editura Humanitas, București, 1992, pp. 169 – 188.

one expects to be". Not even the survivors of the impending cataclysm that is waiting for us will ever find the tranquillity: they "will carry on their miserable lives, subhuman race, slick gents of apocalypse". As usually Cioran's nihilist attitude reaches the deepest levels of negativism. The moralist himself seems to feel good in his role of "funeral sophist" and thinks of himself as "the real herald", that is "the one who announces the Chaos".

According to Cioran, the language, as the reason and its abstractions, acts like an instrument of decline. The words, that subsequently become philosophic concepts (Plato, Kant, Hegel) reveals from the very beginning the direct, vivid contact with things. Man should give up for good his condition of creator in order to remove this cancer, as the mystic does when he accepts "the vow of silence". Thus man's disastrous terrestrial adventure ends – Cioran asserts slightly pompous. And as the man is the most recent creature of all, it is obvious that he will be the one who first leaves the scene of existence.

We only spoke about some of Cioran's ideas concerning "the faces of decline". These are astonishing not only through novelty, but also through their intensity. They cause a real shock of conscience to the one who is not ready to receive them. The author has no problem in reiterating and the reader got used to such a redundant discourse. The cadence and rhetoric of the text, the abrupt ecstatic method of passing from one reflection to another is more impressive than the logic of reasons (renamed by us in discursive terms). As in a trance, the ideas – no matter how common they are – become *revelations* with a serious ultimatum message.

This ecstasy of lucidity is intended to be an exercise of "de-fascination" but the result is again the seduction with the help of paradoxes. Through fragment and aphorism, specific aspects of discontinuous thinking, Cioran – surprisingly – seeks the absoluteness. An unwonted mixture of spontaneity and perfection gives an unmistakable stylistic feature to his writings. Cioran's "style" is not only an issue of language. One can add the frenzy and stunning variety of ideas to recently discovered power of that *écriture* (as a result of adopting another language). Thus Cioran is an abyssal thinker, dissimulated in a misanthrope who gracefully carries a mask of an aesthete of nothingness.

There is also a remarkable method in his writing and reflections. In the first paragraphs of the text he seems more aloof. He starts with the old eras of decline (towards which he shows a type of aesthetic complicity) while the analysis follows general, paradigmatic aspects. Stylistically speaking, Cioran seems to be under that "emotional Eleatism" as he called it in a previous book. As reflection goes on, one can notice a loss of breath. Interruptions are more and more often and abrupt, the text is breaking up, but on the other hand the moralist's remarks gain incisiveness and receive the aspect of a personal humour difficult to be defined. In a certain point, towards the end, the discourse almost becomes confession, in a first person narration: "I can feel the age of Life; I can feel its old age, its decrepitude (…). And I can feel the species' entire pressure and I assumed its entire loneliness" etc.

Being celebrated at the publishing of *A Short History of Decay* (1949) as the real philosopher of nothingness and absurd, Cioran certifies, through his obsessions and humour, the uncertainty of European spirit of the time, in an unprecedented panic of all values (compromised by war and Holocaust). Although the moralist does not have an assertive

discourse, the text on decay has to be read as a reflection towards the – more or less guilty – conscience of this devastating crisis, without a key. It becomes clear that in Cioran's work there are no neuter ideas, only *experiences* of a total existential commitment.

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The Critic and His Shadow: Gheorghe Grigurcu's Poetry

The article reveals the relations between the poetry and criticism written by Ghe. Grigurcu, enumerating the stages of the poet's development in the constant shadow of the critic. The features of the poetry – refinement, delicacy, grace, elegant and focused writing, ineffable notations and abstractions – merge with the exigencies that the same author, as a critic, shows towards poetry in general.

Although he was a couple of books ahead of the critic, the poet Gheorghe Grigurcu has always stayed in his dense shadow. The pronounced personality of the critic has been hiding, apparently forever, the more discreet personality of the poet, in spite of a strong esteem achieved by the first from the very beginning. Some critic authorities had launched suggestions that were more than flattering about his poetry. But these words had no effect since Grigurcu's notoriety as a poet continued to be a clandestine one. At least besides a strict circle of experts. While the critic is always present on the lists (no matter how short or hurried) made by the protagonists, the poet doesn't even appear on the most generous lists. As a matter of fact, not even on those that claim to be exhaustive. The poet's silent condition is in a flagrant contradiction with his ecstatic fame as a critic, as well as with the sentences of the critics who have openly expressed their enthusiasm from the start. There is no doubt that Gheorghe Grigurcu would have been a much more publicly preeminent poet if he hadn't been accompanied by such an overwhelming critic.

(Even) a surface perspective on the heavier pieces in the critic reception he had achieved as a poet reveals the contradictory status of the poet: the higher and exalted the sentences of the critics were, the more diaphone the poetic glory became, as if there was no determination between the two. And this incongruence is not supported by improvised critics but by the very famous personalities in the field. A year before his debut in '68 (*Un trandafir invata matematica / A rose learns Mathematics*), Stefan Augustin Doinas, for instance, was seeing in his poetry "one of the most advanced landmarks on the line of modernism". Later on, after his poetry had grown into several books, Doinas would recognize in it "a type of philosophic poetry of a great authenticity". "Lyrism and knowledge", "severe and very deep", "excelling /…/ in sentences of a rare metaphorical pregnancy /…/ in a gnomic style" were at the same time the high peaks of young poet Grigurcu in the perspective of Ion Negoitescu. This conclusion, drawn from the second book published by the poet (*Trei nori / Three clouds*, 1969) essentially covers the entire poetry published until (and including) *Cotidiene / Everydays* in 86. His profile from *Scriitori contemporani / Contemporary writers* reiterates the initial observation "Grigurcu's sensibility is connected to his thinking, his poetry being under the sign of reason". Grigurcu seemed to be "a poet of reference", "a necessary poet", "in the absence of whom our literature today would be like a piano keyboard missing a key" to Daniel Dimitriu in *Singuratatea lecturii / The Solitude of Reading.* He is also put on a significant position, among "Livresque and ironic poets" by Marin Mincu in his famous *Poetry and generation*. His poetry is defined here in the terms of a "filtering of perpetual essences" and of a "mysterious empowerment of significations", while his poetic vision appears as an operation by which "the intellect puts back /…/ the world in an innocent equation, rebuilding its ingenuity". In Ion Pop's *Pagini transparente / Transparent Pages*, Grigurcu's poetry proved to be "a representative creation for the present moment of Romanian lyrism". Ion Pop centers his commentary on "ingenio arts" and on "contemplative

rigor", on the reading of the "understood" in things rather than on their "verifiable forms". The structure of a dialectic oxymoron is deciphered by Cornel Regman (in *Latest critic explorations*) in the very heart of this poetry, beating in reflexive systoles and imaginative diastoles: "A sort of reflection, guarded by image; at the same time, an image alerting a thought". Finally, I would also remind Nicolae Manolecu's deposition for "the sovereign analogy" and for "crystalograpy", as well as the change of perspective in interpretation from the music of the abstracts to the "concreteness of the sensation". I cannot tell what other lawyers could have pleaded better for the cause of Grigurcu's poetry. It would have been useless anyway. Because this poetry strictly addresses the intellectualist ghetto, where refinement is not simple pathology, but a condition of sensibility.

There is no doubt that Grigurcu's poetry may be accused of a sort of self-congruence that is lead too far away. Maybe even of the

Fără îndoială că poezia lui Grigurcu poate fi acuzată de un fel de egalitate cu sine prea departe dusă. Poate chiar de orgoliul unei identităţi statice. Măcar în măsura în care elementele introduse în reacţia lirică sînt de la început şi pînă la sfîrşit aceleaşi, iar echilibrul lor e ţinut cu stricteţe. E vorba însă de un echilibru construit din suave dezechilibre, din pendulări ale acului sub presiunea gramajului delicat care favorizează, imperceptibil, pe rînd, fie hieratica ideală a realului, fie senzualizarea abstractelor. Poetul se poartă ca un hedonist al melancoliilor şi priveşte lumea ca un estetician. Poate chiar ca un estetist ce contrage realul în rafinamente. Dar această privire estetizantă, care domesticeşte lumea în imagini, nu e lipsită de iritări. Epigrafia şi-a avut din capul locului contrapunctul în epigramatic. Mînii fulgurante scutură mereu delicata pînză de păianjen în care sînt prinse boabele de rouă ale imaginarului. Iritările aduc preţiozitatea lui Grigurcu la incitanţa expresionistă. Cu respiraţia scurtă, e drept, dar cu o pregnanţă rezolută a imprecaţiei: "Atît de păguboase vremuri pentru pietrari/ cînd piatra se fărîmiţează asemenea unei ciuperci uscate// atît de nerentabile vremuri pentru tîmplari/ căci lemnul se transformă-n rouă// atît de ingrate vremuri pentru fierari/ căci fierul se preschimbă-n frig polar// doar poeţii provinciali se-ngraşă-n subsoluri/ aidoma guzganilor". Astfel de elanuri atomizate ale resentimentului întrerup mereu reveria contemplativă, adăugînd o vivacitate nervoasă ceremoniei hieratizante. Gheorghe Grigurcu operează, alternativ, cînd nu simultan, o inducţie a vitalului în virtualitatea conceptului şi o inducţie a ideii în senzual. Linia de miraj a ideii o reprezintă la el infuzia în senzual, pe cînd linia de miraj a senzaţiilor e reprezentată de puritatea glacială a ideii. Fiecare din cele două limbaje trăieşte beţia convertirii, a transfigurării contrariante. Notaţia visează climatul ideaţiei, iar ideaţia are febra senzaţiei. Fireşte, cînd cele două căi nu devin una singură, poemele par angajate fie într-un protocol de epurare a realului, fie, dimpotrivă, într-unul de senzorializare a inefabilelor. Formula lui capătă atunci o tranşanţă deliberată şi se nutreşte dintr-o violenţă premeditată a conceptului poetic asupra viziunii. Mai cu seamă în poemele tinereţii e vizibilă o persecuţie a realului, mînat cu sila spre fascinaţia ideii şi spre canonul geometric. Egalitatea de sine a lui Grigurcu nu e, însă, un simplu imobilism. În interiorul unei hieratici se dezvoltă la el o dialectică, o progresie spre fenomenalitatea spectaculară a imaginaţiei şi spre concreteţea învolburată în diafanitate. Gheorghe Grigurcu, după cum au spus-o, chiar de la început, primii săi interpreţi, participă la un mod intelectual al lirei. Numai că "intelectualitatea" sa poetică e coborîtă în senzaţie, la fel cum senzaţia e ridicată în idee. Poetul trăieşte, de fapt, într-o continuă exultanţă imaginativă şi intelectivă, în care imaginaţia se foloseşte de intrumentele intelecţiei, iar intelecţia de vocaţia corporealizantă a imaginativului. Poemele nu sînt grefe senzuale pe idee şi nici excrescenţe ideale ale senzualului; ele sînt, de fapt, epifanii delicat-senzuale ale spiritului, pure ciocniri ale ideii cu senzaţia, ciocniri rezolvate în clinchete imaginative.

Inspite of an intellectual pressure over the sensibility and a conceptual contribution of the imaginary, the lyric ritual does not adore abstraction but only the stylistic manufacturing

of the concreteness. Elaborated fulgurations, in which the spontaneity seems to be the product of premeditation, of freshness and imaginative grace, the poems record the moment when the idea gets sensually imploded, or when it is in full efflorescence, focusing on the contraction of the text into an irradiant germ. The fulgurate principle of the imaginary meets the imperative rigor of discursive concision, and from their concentric pressure a lapidary lyrism results, made of purely vibrating notations. Grigurcu speaks almost exclusively in the poetic language of Laconia, practicing an ascent of the discourse as a strict utterance of the essentiality. His productivity comes from "erasures", from an elliptic art, from a religion of concentration. "Irrelevant words" are systematically evacuated from this language of essentialness telegrams: "Şi unul după altul capitulează cuvintele de prisos/ se desprind cum frunza de pe ram cum fluturele de pe frunză/ cum spiritul de pe buză". This cold fervor of fundamentalism and lapidarity stimulates an expressivity that is loaded with the electricity of meaning and tensioned between glacial and ardent, rigor and formal fascination. Grigurcu's expression is vegetally fresh, sublimed in its own formal purity. Together with the analogical principle of the imaginary, which is used with ostentation, Grigurcu's poetry frequently uses figures of concentrated tension. The oxymoron is, obviously, the most preferred in this poetics of suave impact of the contraries: "Aduceţi această cenuşă sintetică pe care focul n-o cunoaşte/ această cenuşă străină de ardere rudă cu gheţarii/ scornire demonică precum un ţipăt fără sunet precum/ un text fără litere precum o ploaie uscată precum/ o neagră zăpadă încununînd o albă ţărînă" etc. Intelectual and imaginative reveries, fascinations transposed into a grammar of refinement, Grigurcu's poems, mixing in homeopatic doses the livresque refinement and the plastic perception are often pure suggestive escapes, metaphors where the imagination is exulting, and where there is to be found a gracility like the one in Ion Pillat's one-verse poems: "deasupra spicelor coapte tremură aerul/ cum rîndurile unei scrisori nescrise". Such redundant exercises speak about a constant concerc of Grigurcu, that of finding a way to translate the ineffable. Grigurcu is a poet who lives from the awareness of the ineffable, he is the one who is always seeking a language of compatibility. His expedition in the ineffable, into the suave mystery of the poetics are exercises of translating the unspeakable, of comparing it. Many – if not the most – of his poems whirl, hypnotized, around this mystery of the poem itself. The themes of creation become more offensive, more voluntary and they engage the vision into speculation. The contemplation of the poetic becomes, therefore, not only an act of definition, but also one of problematization in which the suggestion sublimes a tragic meaning: "Poetul îşi usucă poeziile/ cu-aceeaşi sugativă ieftină cu care se usucă/ lemnul în pădure vîntul pe boltă osul în ţărînă". The poetic concept, manufactured from suavity and in favor of the contemplation, has no visionary arrogance, but nevertheless it holds a certain sacrificial ethics. However domestic and calm, the poem ends-up devoring its creator, showing its romantic instinct: "Scrii şi transcrii faci şi desfaci/ cuvinte monstruoase ca şi cum/ te-ai juca fără păs cu un dinozaur/ cu un dinozaur ce te lasă să te joci cu el/ înainte de-a te mînca". The suavities also contain dangers, and the poem is not an innocent occupation. Even the contemplation of the real increases the dramatic index of the vision, especially as Grigurcu reads the everyday existence as a simple epiphany of the metaphysical, building the poem at the confluence of direct notation with its mythic paraphrase. The domestic gesture provokes an imaginative and referential explosion, leading the real into the phantasmatic: "Se zvîrcolesc draperiile muiate în cadă/ cum piepturi şi coapse şi bicepşi în Stix". The epigraphy that contracts the real is based in his case on a „precision" imagination („an imagination with the precision of the bullet", says a verse), which turns the lyrism to definitions. This way, the mathematician of the ineffable betrays himself, trying to catch grace itself into a formula. Grigurcu's definitions operate in a baroque fascination of the equivalences. However concise, concentrated and essentialized, his poetry is, in fact, one of paraphrasing the real. It does not

know the vertigo of directness, always taking the mediated way of suggestion. The directness is, in the ceremony of equivalences, a rare and suspect surprise. It is deviated into the analogical and the latter remains a reverberation of the real. Even the most sensual "definitions" gain a delicate index, processing the impetuosity of the notation in vibrant arabesques: "Sînii ei aprigi/ cum doi dobermani în lesă/ aproape cuminţi". Frames of the real, caught through a filter that only reproduces the echoes in it, Grigurcu's poetry provokes the imagination to define the real.

The poet's last volumes, especially those after the 1986 *Cotidiene*, play in a rigurous project of transcription as transfiguration. The imaginative gesture is more carnal and it is usually based on the transformation of the idea into sensation. The poetry is thus moved on a tendency of concretizing, on an enthusiasm of arabesques. Grigurcu's verses are always rituals of invelation, a sort of coding into a sensual hieroglyph. They are about defining the real, after it gets decomposed prismaticaly and re-synthesized. The sensual plasticity is often torn into virulent contours, containing grotesque violence but also a purifying function and a spiritualizing effect. It induces suavity just as it bolds the contours and sublimes in the very instant it transforms abstraction into plasma. An expert of lapidary paraphrases, Gheorghe Grigurcu introduces in an euphoric writing lethal doses of melancholy. Without being an illuminated one, his melancholy remains a solar one. It is a product of grace, not depression. Or, at most, of a depression transposed into grace. Even when it digs into bacovian matters, when the spleen overflows the word, the suavity reflex of the imaginary brings the existential drama into the accuracy of a drawing: "Bolnavă de pestă apa Jiului/ cum o turmă de porci// norii matinali miros a clor/ pînă şi poezia crapă/ cum smalţul unui dinte". The pillow of imagination is always between the poet and its own states, between the poet and the real. The imprecative tendency has an imaginative elegance that makes it a savior. Because its fundament remains the enthusiasm of suggestion, the poem conceived as an imaginative efflorescence. And the poet builds the sensual analogy of the states always leading them towards the extasis of a concrete image: "Şi cum mai sfîrîie/ amintirile/ în unele dimineţi/ cum oul în tigaie". But this sensuality of the feelings is also an escape from their impact, a refuge into the imaginative equivalence. All of Grigurcu's poetry exists in the spirit of analogy, activated from an ostentative candor of formal techniques. His world is, as it has been said, the world of comparison, of equivalences. The comparison works, obviously, with substitutes of the real, with substituents. It Is a project of perfecting and intensification. It seems to be an apology of the real but it is, in fact, a criticism of the real. The poet reactivates, in this way, one of the strong meanings of imagination: that of expressing a fundamental fear, an existential discomfort, and of finding a compensation for these. Imagination is, in fact, a criticism of the real. In this perspective, Grigurcu's poetry is a "criticism", although it is apparently made of ineffable elements and suave beatifications. By his epigraphic formula, by the tenacity of perverting the real by contemplation into refined sensations, Gheorghe Grigurcu is a solitary. As solitary in poetry as is Targu-Jiu.

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I.L Caragiale. The Problematic Real and the Labyrinth as Text. A Hermeneutic Perspective

This study proposes a reinterpretation of I.L. Caragiale's work, abandoning the mimetic realist perspective in order to suggest the configuration of an interrogative manner of reading the text founded on the premise that the author explores the real at metaphysical level, beyond any socio-political implications. In a chaotic world, the writer watches the spectacle of everyday life as if it were a labyrinth that does not generate traumas and anxiety, but hedonism. The excess of matter and reality is the only proof of the ontological absence of truth. Therefore, Caragiale's work reveals the existence of a crisis of meaning, the world being or only appearing to be a mechanism devoid of transcendence. This proposed reinterpretation relies on illustrations from plays, short epic texts, as well as epistolary and publicistic excerpts. This integrating vision reveals the central meaning of the whole exegetical construction.

A hedonist in labyrinth

Protected by its ambiguous position, both on the inside and on the outside, Caragiale's perception is that of a hedonist: matter shows itself to him as a fascinating spectacle – and not a terrifying one – of shapes, contexts, colours, a show displaying actions which are difficult to set into rational or reasonable patterns. Everything unfolds in a type of sophisticated balance in which no interpretation is decisively motivated. However, such a lack of decision does not alienate Caragiale and nor does so the labyrinth-like expansion of space. An epicurean solely finds a possibility of being amazed: life itself is a show and Caragiale is driven to it like a moth to the flame by its mystery, by the abyss of the "constructions" which shatter any expectation and the logic of common sense. The paradox and surprise, taken to the point of absurdity, having consequence in the de-materialization of the tangible, are built by Caragiale with the purpose of repeating an equation deciphered by him in the real world. Fascinated by the world, his desire is, in his turn, to be able to amaze. And he does so as if actions of this kind were exemplary, not exceptional, marginal situations.

Let us not forget that the volume *Notes and sketches (Note și Schițe)* from 1892, begins with the text *In Nirvana*. And here, as in Eminescu, we see in a zigzag to which Caragiale has always been sensitive, the monadic image of the world: "That's how I met him then, that's how he remained until his very last fine moments: joyful and sad; talkative and sullen; gentle and harsh; settling for little and always unhappy with everything; now having the abstinence of a hermit, later voracious for the pleasures of life; running away from people and searching for them; as uncaring as a stoic old man and as irritable as a beautiful woman. Strange mixture! – ideal for the artist, bad for the man!" If this is not something more of a self-portrait, it is without a doubt that, in the particular case which troubles him, Caragiale identifies something from the impenetrable law of life. A sum of paradoxes – even with all the rhetorical interstices of which he can not free himself – and the consequence of a "blind ambition of being": "In the sickest head, the brightest intelligence – the saddest soul in the most tired body! And if we cried when his friends and enemies, admirers and those who were envious lay him under the "sacred lime", we did not cry his death: we cried for the toil of his

life, for the suffering that his sensitive nature endured from circumstances, from people, from itself".

Besides, the next text of the volume *Irony* places the poet's life in the same terms. Avid for the details which he articulates voluptuously in a structure, Caragiale is neutral concerning morals. In any case, pain leaves way to a terrible admiring force which has both the world as well as its own constructive force as subjects. Such situations, paradoxical, similar to a disruption in the fabric of normality, (pre)tend to condense the core of the world, otherwise inaccessible. Maybe this is why Caragiale chooses the outskirts (if he is not himself chosen by it) as the space for his explorations. Here, on the fringes, the clerk has a more acute sense of the void, which he lives instinctively, even if the world to which he belongs is in a continuous movement of ascension. It is a way of saying that the outskirts do not kill, but build. Life is perceived as a machine, as a succession of paradoxical facts, as a secret mechanism in which the border between hazard and destiny – or fatality – is much more than fragile. It is as if everything were unfolding according to a plan, but is, at the same time, an endless improvisation.

The manner in which he casts an observation made explicitly for art, over what is real, is particularly strange. What is art? Caragiale states during a conference: "the human spirit's attempt at satisfying a great need of the human spirit". So, Caragiale sees the same gratuitousness in the world: its identity, lacking in meaning; its only goal, joyfulness. In any case, immersing in matter offers the chance for a meaning, be it of a secondary nature. Caragiale asks himself: "Is there a more powerful means of ridding ourselves of the chaotic invasion of the world into our poor soul than divine music? – as vague and vast as the world, integrated in the great mysterious meaning of harmony." (*An Artist*) Harmony, the seal of life placed within the model of a mechanism which Caragiale tries, more than once, to understand and explore with the aid of the "vessel" named fiction. This time, there are no traces of cynicism, but only a fascination full of grief: "When it was at the peak of its functionality, the admirable machine collapsed : the regulator, which from the beginning had a flawed part, broke down in the midst of its movement. The device was crushed and the maestro insane!" Finally, "death completed the literary creation of insanity".

Isolated in the midst of ironies which easily glide in graveness, the affirmation that refers to harmony suggests the existence, not only in literary creations, but also in the world, of a rigor of "subtextual" order. Such rigor, transformed into sense, is the sole element which justifies existence, through a transcendence that does not have, in a proper sense, anything transcendental, and which can also save it. Here, in any case, the hypothesis of an equation is formulated, whose unknown elements are the world and art, more precisely, the gathering of forms and sense. What unifies them is their structure which does not exclude the notion of "vague" as a fundamental given that explains fascination. If it were not for it, and if the fundament had not been build in fascination (not in any other kind of usability), the world would truly be uninteresting. Thus, permanently left in a hypothetical state, manifesting itself as accidental upgrades, giving the impression of fatality, it, at least, gives the impression of contribution, even without any sort of deliberation, of the individual. How could we otherwise explain to ourselves the strange association, so puzzling for many of his readers, of Caragiale's musical passion and the voluptuousness of transcendence towards the elementary?

In Berlin, Beethoven's concerts and caviar, metonymically speaking, are complementary obsessions. Both express basic needs. However, things may be a bit different: on the one hand, the world, which satisfies its needs to perceive matter with the senses, and, on the other side of the spectrum, the architecture of a sense and the illusion of its articulation based upon unknown laws.

Maybe it is in this sense, and not only in that of hesitation between irony and graveness, or between rhetoric and style, that the sketch which opens the volume *Notes and literary fragments (Notițe și fragmente literare)* is eloquent. *Between Two Pieces of Advice (Între două povețe)* implements the space of hesitation just like a niche in which the self can manifest itself freely. A niche of creativity, both in the linguistically limited plan of the play upon words and also in the plan of the world which it creates. Another fact worth mentioning is that there is no actual rupture here, only a discrepancy of intensity. It is what explains, to a certain extent, the final reply of the storyteller from *The Wonderful Frog* (after Mark Twain). Swept into a vertigo of "fictions", he replies: "Well, father Simion, why don't you rid me of this limp cow at least for today. What do you want of me, to put up with all your nonsense in one single day? Keep some for later." The leap from lies to wonders is not only proof of a simple play upon words, but also of the need to still remain in ambiguity, even if reading everything in an ironic tone. It is as if the territories of this invention should not be, in any way, taken as being false.

Let us return to the advice of the "two intimate counsellors": "I know them both well, better than they know me. I am sure of their character; they can never be sure of mine. Numerous times I have teased them, paying attention to the plead of one, despite hearing the advice of the other, which I did not take into consideration. But it is also their fault. One drags me to the left, the other to the right; when one says yes, the other says no, so that I either have to stay put, waiting in vain for the impossible reconciling of the two, or follow one and thus contradict the other. What is regrettable for me is that each time, after I follow one down a path for a long time, when I look back, I regret that I did not take into account the plead of the other one."

I refuse to read such texts as if they were programmatic, nor do I find in them any didactic allegories. Still, I am tempted to see in both counsellors, besides all sorts of structural zigzags, the rupture (in the sense of complementary addiction) between the world and sense, between the picturesque of life and the harmony of a monadic understanding. It is the balance, very frail indeed, in which the hedonist engages himself. Actually, in this context, fragility gives balance its strength. Practically, beyond this didactic prologue, *Between two Pieces of Advice* actually is a sketch about fragility. Nina, maybe the embodiment of a nymph-like Mephistopheles, delicate and strange, provocative and gracious, fancy and dominative through hesitation, today is just a shadow of sadness descended through the first to the last pages in light irony. Who would say now that I.L. Caragiale would not have known how to express the fine meander of the feminine soul! Even here, irony is a sign of the diabolical in order to avoid sentimentalism, to remain, even in the form of an illusion, on the outside. The reference to Satanism is also nothing more than a literary construction. Of course, in order to minimize the effect, Caragiale makes use of the frame of the two trusty advisors.

Therefore, one must remember the belief, which also has an auto-referential nature, that "a little devil can slither through the narrowest cranny". This means that if we are to talk

about the demonism of Caragiale, his own before that of the world he creates, then we must summon his very option for hesitation, for the outskirts as the proper place for it, for those niches through which no reality can institutionalise itself in order to surpass the stage of approximation. Even so, Nina remains a dream. To penetrate through such crannies is to explore a hypothetical realm delicately created through processes of sophisticated textual engineering, sometimes too conspicuous. This is the very territory of Caragialean writing where everything is possible as if nothing were real. And, remarkably, everything occurs through the exploration of reality. The hypothetical is thus understood as a manifestation of the endless possibilities of being's existence and as a permanent source of world interpretation.

The problematic real and the return to the labyrinth

Almost any text can be invoqued in order to comment on the Caragialean fascination with the world. Take, for example, *A Visit to "Iulia Hasdeu" Castle (O vizită la castelul „Iulia Hasdeu")*, this masked interview bordering on literary report, which is actually the story of a failed, or rather refused initiation. Cãlinescu commented on its malicious undertone on the grounds that Caragiale had previously published a series of ironies regarding the spiritualist preoccupations of Hasdeu in "The Romanian Whim" (1893). Undoubtedly, Hasdeu is one of the authors Caragiale identifies with; what brings them together is the demonic historionism and free spirit, the pleasure of creating scenes and a passion for details and, why not, even a certain view on art, a subject which is in need of further exploration. Furhermore, there is this humane issue that is so much more relevant when we explore these the writers' lives and their idiosyncrasies regarding Maiorescu.

In the pages of the report, Maiorescu practically becomes the object of an "execution", at least to the extent he is rendered so by Hasdeu, who regards Alecsandri as our greatest literary figure, and Heliade as a "gigantic figure". And this commentary occurs while also considering that "Eminescu had talent, but he is far from possibly being named a great national poet". If Caragiale's admiration is sincere (otherwise, what meaning could have been attributed to the visit), the vector or relativisation is equally real, managing, however, to remain harmless. Within the portrait, there is only the scarcely perceptible shadow of an ironic exaggeration: "I listen in awe to the vertiginous games of this high spirit, all of them equally full of the charm of inspiration and of the power of persuasion. This spirit juggles with balls or oranges". What does Caragiale discover about the castle?! A building whose architecture, literally inspired, should bear in the most precise way *the seal of the world* and *the fingerprint of God*. As it is written somewhere: "In every corner, matter has an idea to say". Overwhelmed by so much meaning impregnated within matter by the view of a spirit integrated in the cosmic order, he should stop for a moment to calm himself on a terrace. Yet, the host is possessed by his mission and by the ascending route of the vision which dominates him: "Higher! Higher!", he urges. And later: "Now, higher still! Higher!". All this occurs to experience the sublime scene of the cosmic show in the middle of the night. From this comes the final invitation: "You must stay here tonight, to see a starry night on the upper terrace, to better understand everything which I have told you." But the visitor (a mere… man) finishes

his work and leaves. He "catches" the train so he can get off at Ploiesti. Ploiesti?! It is the emblem of the real world. Caragiale stays here to make, as Marta Petreu explains, a demonstration of the (im)possibility of knowing a thing in itself. Involved in this story, Kant is ultimately himself passionate about astronomy. However, Caragiale remains an empiric sensualist: he prefers the cosmic sublime and the more human monadic sense of pleasure. Evidently, he is not the "teacher of the new school", which draws an ellipsis on the blackboard in front of the pupils in order to talk with soberness about the "Ugniverz", the newspaper which is, without a doubt, "incompetent in the matter". Caragiale is more like Bârsescu, the student who mistakes the ellipsis which indicates the „trajectory of the comet" for a cucumber.

But even in the text of the most prosaic world, even if it may be the bizarre incorporation of a destiny, Caragiale questions the mechanism which establishes a meaning. What could be the common factor between such a report about "matter having an idea to express" and a short story such as *Cănuţă, a Twisted Man (Cănuță, om sucit)* ?! Apparently none – but the latter itself follows the idea turned fact, in a burlesque context. We can skip the normative condensation and the quite sterile didacticism which reduces the living to a mere template of a scheme. Even beyond the artificial image of synthesis there are, tied like beads on a piece of string, but lacking the coherence of a motivated spiritual impulse, the suggestions which put folkloric Satanism and fatal oddities next to the teacher of the new school, in the same line as Spiridon from *A Stormy Night (O noapte furtunoasă)*, and political intrigues against an adulterous backdrop. No matter how sketchy, the "report" of a destiny can be found here as well. But what exactly connects all these strings beyond the strange nature of the character?! Nothing. As for his nature, despite not being able to explain everything, it allows for an even more interesting investigation. Finally, Cănuţă is a blasé person with passionate reactions, taken to the extreme: apathetic when he is beaten with cruelty or cheated on by his wife, he divorces, makes exaggerated decisions shortly after being slapped in the face or when his fish is overcooked at home. He abandons his pregnant wife, but is touched by her toothache and remarries her.

These are oddities which are accompanied by sufficient coincidences to create the impression of a disarticulate text, exactly because of its conspicuous intentionality which reveals, *in nuce*, Caragiale's obsession with articulating a mechanism. This is a true witness. But what is the real cause of the mechanism? What fuels it?! Is man a *godly* or a *demonic agent*?! In other words, could he be a conservative spirit, fanatical in his choice of action, or a liberal, relative, empty one?! This is – at the edge or irony, in balance, in the space in which everything is possible, with a heavier weight on the scale on which the denunciation regarding the hidden secret of things presses down – the opinion of a narrator. Because this is a short story (as the text indicates) and not a sketch, or a report, Mr Iancu is not so visible from behind them, although he is just as present. One reads, in *Lache and Mache. A Short Story*: „In the first week after receiving their pay, their principles are established: on recognizing the order and the providential goal of mankind; on the truth that man is not a mere animal which lives to eat and drink, but a godly agent, having an important mission in the complexity of the universe; on the necessity of the reigning government; finally, on purely conservative grounds". This course does not stop here: "After the last coins leave their garments, Lache and Mache abandon these 'worn out' and 'false' principles; then the world and mankind are

simple confusions without a plan or an order; all governments are bad, but the worst is the one in power; man is a damned plaything of blind fate, a victim of society – almost anarchist principles – everything fades into a grave! – bitter skepticism!". Lache and Mache, "true encyclopaedists" (because they "know a bit of nothing about everything") are modern men, emblems of their time. They take part in discussions about "poetry, the future of industry, the drawbacks of the constitutional system, the progress of electricity, microbes, Wagner, Darwin, Panama, *Julie Belle*, spiritism, fachirism, *l'Exilée* and so on". But they are people of their time in the fullest sense: just as with the "the Capon", their quarrel leads to cosmic disorder; their reunion results in the recovery of cosmic harmony, all becoming a movement within the ironic hyperbole of an integralist view of the world. Therefore, fed by the muteness of an imanentist perspective for which, however, everything becomes illusion, the question persists: is man *a godly agent* or *a damned plaything of blind fate*? Or is he both? Any opposition becomes a law of harmony through repetition.

Finally, the simple paradox which maintains the mechanism in motion is not sufficient for an explanation, if we consider the exemplary case from *Cănuţă, a Twisted Man*. Thus, we encounter a demonstration of the impossibility of understanding, because Caragiale offers in detail every bizarre coincidence, however, without surpassing the surface of a mechanism which acts as a will onto itself. As a result, destiny is not destiny, but the surface of a challenge. Still, as within the whole Caragialean creation, two things establish themselves simultaneously: on the one hand, on the edge of a realistic view, the discourse about the world, and on the other, at the edge of the metatextual probing, the discourse of the world as text. The impression that the signals *are recognized* overlays upon the one that they *are constructed*. In one instance, the author does nothing but recognize them himself, in another case, he suggests they should be recognized. Nevertheless, in both cases there is the joy of a hedonist – who gazes at the spectacle of the world (not of the mystic one, but of the material one: "What a crowd! What elegance! What plentitude!", he exclaims in *Sunday Rest (Repausul Dominical)*, while contemplating the bustle of "carriages, chaises, automobiles" on Victoria Street) and also lets himself be gazed upon by a world for which he, the grand conjuror, leaves, at times, a detail in the open. In one case, if there are not others as well, the world which is watching is within himself, the actor.

The situation from *Sentimental Correspondence (Corespondenţă sentimentală)* is equally hilarious as it is reflected in the letter from the acquaintance who comes to think that he is the hero of a farce which Mari plays on him. Fear, pleading, madness are followed by the joy of participating in a show. But, except for the interpretation itself, there is no meaning. He does nothing more than put a mechanism into motion even when he creates the impression of copying it – perfectly within it, which creates the permanent feeling of eeriness. Were it not exaggerated, I would invoke de Chirico's paintings…, even if a world full of proteiform details almost always opposes an exact rendering of them. Void of interpretations, facts lose any consistency, becoming almost exclusively interpretation. "Why? Why, shouldn we always have to bother with philosophizing, with finding the cause of everything… It is enough to notice how things happen…". Let us admit that, taken out of context, these words seem to resemble the lesson of Euthanasius from the well-known short story by Eminescu. There one reads: "It is facts which are given explanations, but it is facts themselves which are the truth".

And this is in a letter in which he pleads for the natural state, in which only the blind ambition of being operates, freed from any subjective participation. However, in the case of Caragiale, so much passion is evidence of a mechanism which is more violent and without… an ideology, empty but enticing intelligence because of it, placed, either way, at the opposite pole of the cosmic sublime, which does not offer any reason for becoming unsettled. Most likely it would offer the chance for metaphysical irony to manifest itself, because reality feeds upon the most precise strangeness. An explanation of this mechanism can be found in *How Could One Become a Revolutionary and a Politician... (Cum devine cineva revoluţionar şi om politic) ?*

Next to this mechanism which does not know transcendence, which is, however, about to offer the illusion of transcendence, there is the same euphoric void in the articulation of the endless labyrinth of the world. The labyrinth does not scare, but protects. No defense reflex is alarmed in a space which proves to be virtual, in which everything is possible and in which, finally, nothing seems to happen. Any somber feeling yields to euphoria. Thus, in a forest of signs, chases, searches, raids, wanderings take place; the Caragialean body of work is full of people who rummage, ransack, and run in search of places or people, as if in an exaltation of agony. But agony creates "pleasure". No one is ready to contemplate; but everyone – including the reader involved with the text by means of the visible presence of an author who, like a little cynical demiurge, frames everything – records facts, exhausts them in a self-devouring delirium, becoming like little detectives who, often blinded by their own search, forget to word their interrogations. No kind of investigation regarding the ultimate meaning with which they are still obsessed is undertaken. The cause which generates facts remains obscure, like in *Inspection (Inspecţiune)*. And what is this text, also built on the obsession of the bizarre mechanism of life, if not a demonstration – of the *purity* of fiction, hard or impossible to overlay on the existent -, a farce played on the reader? Without a doubt, this happens almost permanently in Caragiale's work, only this time, the body is perfectly crystallized and the illusion is total, despite its appearance of mimetic circumscription in a recognizable space. It is a demonstration which has its polemic substrate.

Actually, Caragiale subtly prepares the failure of any interpretation, only leaving facts to be known. So, being asked the question which is stubbornly prompted by critics, "Why, Mr. Anghelache?", Caragiale does nothing more than amuse himself, pleased by the perfection of the game. While maintaining some coordinates regarding attitude and the context of romantic ontology, the situation is no different in *Poor Dionis*. Let us remember the author's "two conclusive words" at the end of the short story: "Who is the real man of these happenings: Dan or Dionis? Many of our readers will have searched the key to what has happened to him in the things which surrounded him; […] eventually, with the thread of causality in their hands, many will think they have guessed the meaning of the happenings, dismissing them as mere dreams of a sick imagination". So the key of these happenings is not a solution, the result of a civilized rationality, but the challenge and the integrity of a world. A pure world, because textually, even if Caragiale's humor is dark: similar to himself, of course, "good Mr Anghelache did not want to answer". It is polemic and ironic humor. Thus, this is how it ends, with a lock which moves in another reality different to that of the world, a famous sketch. But this is not the only outside intervention which relies not on a passionate complicity, but on an ironic one, possible in the midst of the hypothesis of a paper existence.

We read: "From Dobroteasa take a left turn to exit towards the keys next to Piaţa Mare. When passing in front of the morgue, I see the funeral carriage: a newly-arrived guest, fed up with the heat of life, soon to descend in the cool (h)otel. Here it is no longer about making a parody of the style of the worldly press…, although it could be about parodying his friends' way of thinking, being brought up in the worldly style, which means intelligent and cynical, or, in a word, Miticism.

An admirer of Sophocles, Caragiale will become fascinated by the idea of fatality, as a transcendent mechanism but just as well by the creation of a fictional world which can not tumble when facing any exegetic confrontation. What results from the combination of these elements is the question he explicitly prompts in this text. But it is a question which is a fundament of the Caragialean style of writing. The question of a… detective. Again, however, we glide from the territory of reality to that of fictional truth. And the question exits the world so as to enter the text. At least, that is what we ascertain, because the vague geometry of a labyrinth also appears in the text. In its centre there is Mr Anghelache, of course, with the strange mechanism of his life. But there is another labyrinth as well, that of the mundane spaces: pubs, markets, bars, establishments, streets, breweries, the keys, even the morgue. In a world of suspicion (after all, his friends are looking for Anghelache to warn him about the imminent check), what follows is a wandering on a trajectory lacking in meaning: in the middle of the night until dawn, in Dobroteasa, at his home, then two or three times in every pub, then at the dairy farm, back again in Dobroteasa and finally, when the men are to do nothing more ("from here on, may God protect Mr. Anghelache!"), the sign, owing to the simple accident of encountering the funeral carriage. Otherwise, there is no sort of clue. It is by mere chance that they arrive at the morgue and find the great secret in it, as if in an athanor. Maybe Miticã, the one from the café, who leads them uselessly towards the dairy farm, is a sign. And what about this Miticã, who seems to come from the pages of Mateiu Caragiale?! Here he is: "In the small room at the back, another comrade… At the dim light of an Auer light bulb, the comrade's face resembles the icon of a martyr after great sufferings: as white as a ghost, with blue shadows; his jaws are clenched; his nose drawn; his eyes lost in ecstasy. In his just-as-white hand, as if no blood were flowing underneath his skin, he holds a teaspoon, which he uses to slowly, slowly stir all the sugar in a cup full of coffee. Every now and then he sighs deeply, enlarging his nostrils. As soon as his comrades see him, they come closer and greet him. He smiles at them – with the holy smile of a martyr who can see, through the opening of the skies, the light of eternal life – and goes on stirring in his cup without changing the speed of the action".

So, these are comrades caught in a fight… Were he not drunk, we could say that Miticã is the embodiment of mystery, that the gloomy prediction resides within him. As reflected in this passage, Miticã is nothing more than the shadow of a clue, a mere appearance. Like Anghelache, he is a closed door for those who seek signs. Beyond the interpretation of signs, remains the unsophisticated pleasure of their identification and framing in the territory of the vague. This is why the labyrinth does not frighten. The Epicurean is, after all, not afraid of death. Blasé, having reached ataraxia, he experiences the joy of being in this world at a constant intensity.

Reality is challenged and the void is forced to come into form. In other words, the exercises in style about reality endow the possible with the quality of truth. It is as if one considered everything to be style and, consequently, actions – which characters pursue – are nothing but style. But being style, they have the undeniable consistency of the real world. It is by this means that the initial indication from *The Mates* can be explained: "The reader will forgive me for not giving any indication regarding tone, action and temperamental range in the dialogue, - indications so necessary for an appropriate reading, - and will replace its absence with imagination". Thus, Caragiale offers just facts – but only with the purpose of their "interpretations". If it is not wholly so, then the question regarding the balance of the unknown factors in this equation, which put the world and the text in motion from the shadows, persists. And everything occurs under the fascinated eyes of the author, who, omniscient, but playing the role of the one with a limited gaze, stares into the labyrinth from above and asks questions regarding identity. But the band of Möbius is everywhere.

In *Pleasure Train (Tren de Plăcere)*, for example, we find a labyrinth which prompts the poetry of love. On the one hand, actions in their meaningless delirium, on the other, the ambiguous suggestion of the actions, from which, despite all the ironic subtext, poetry does not disappear. It is as if Caragiale were similar to a Cekhov without innocence, present both within and outside of the text, capable of amusing himself behind the veils which protect him although they can not save him. Often around, death is not a style. Or it is a style which devours itself, making the fall into the world possible. This is how Miticã, from the monologue *April 1st*, becomes the victim of his own trap. What is a farce if not a possible labyrinth which causes in the person exposed to it the anxiety of motivating actions? After all, Lefter Popescu or Anghelache, in different ways, see the world as a theatre, or, to be more precise, as a stage where farces occur according to the instructions coming from the cynical director, who the author only attempts to copy occasionally. Being himself a blasé and skeptical director, Miticã falls into the trap of another, uncontrollable mechanism, of strange reactions, possibly psychologically motivated, although Caragiale does not provide any psychological analysis. Even a text such as this one is included in the group of texts which are the result of a hedonism fed with suspicion, searches and the vague. A hedonism which approximates reality.

Identity? This competition between truth and reality is the subject of much of Caragiale's work. There is even a sketch which is entitled *Identity*... Of course, he descends into the mundane and the anecdotic, because the stake is not that of a questionable philosopher. But why refuse it a higher meaning? Because these facts demonstrate how easily the false can be mistaken for the authentic; what is more, that the false is always mistaken for the authentic, because the view on truth contradicts the reality of the truth. In other words, form replaces essence, becoming essence, even if only as a specter. Thus, reference is necessary to the anecdotes from the memorialistic sphere. Without a form of identification, the hero can not withdraw a meager sum of money from the Parisian branch of a bank. However, a gentleman (English; red-haired; striped suit; enormous wallet, real crocodile skin, etc. etc…") who eventually proves to be a criminal, is handed a large sum. Similarly, at the border, without a passport, it is impossible for him to pass, while an anarchist, Moscow citizen (but who is "an excellent person, good, honest and moral; but… restless and incurable"), carrying "a wad of documents", succeeds without being hindered. This is where

salvation comes from, so our hero is called Bob Schmecker, and is an American citizen. What is more, "the president of the U.S.A 'asks all military and civil authorities on the planet to let me pass and aid me and offer me protection if needed". So, with this new name, the anecdote is farfetched and, obviously, adds in an exaggerated dose, amusement to sorrow. But it is not in the simple coincidences that the meaning of the sketch must be searched for, nor in the satirical humor of the story, but in… the title, *Identity*. After all, this is how easy it is to be someone else and how easily *you yourself* can become a mere, empty form. Thus, the authorities – the only ones who have to take the test of credibility – who are looking for the truth are merely incompetent.

The same themes are found in the texts of the Bulgarian cycle. In *The Last Hour!...*, the ridiculous note referring to a journalist who is searching for the sensationalist is undeniable. Any kind of information is nonsense. Conversely, everything takes place on the night before the fair of St Mary's. So, it is a prelude to the time of mask-wearing, which also signifies a change in décor. But, bombarded with sensationalist news, forever contradicted either by the captain, or by a minister, the storyteller eventually takes his role seriously. And, convinced by the fake nature of a piece of news, he does not contradict the almost fanatic journalist, rather he confuses him with new details. This is how a piece of information and a reliable source are created out of nothing! Let us remember Şerban Foarţa's statement about a *demonization of the press* in Caragiale's work: "When the press establishes itself as a source of events , when instead of being a mere receptacle and/or a clear mirror it becomes in the (im)posture of generating them, uncontrollably and malignantly, similar to a tumor, it becomes demonic, literally demonic."

As a result, by reading *Reportage* in the discussed volume, we can ascertain their musical unity, given by the *leit-motif* of the journalistic fabrication. In subtext, however, the problem of the fragile balance between what is true and what is fake can be found. On the route of fabrication, as in a carnival of shapes, any accidental context can embody reality. The same investigation is in Boris Sarafoff!... In its centre, both literally and metaphorically, some "restless journalists" named A., B., C., D. – proof of the fact that the mechanism is interesting, and not the characters, who are used as nameless actors, as those who trigger the plot. While following "the intelligent instruction judge" J. Th. Forescu, who escaped them in the last moment, they meet Boris Sarafoff, guilty of national crimes, at the renown Enache inn. He plays a precise game: self-confidence, courage, impetuosity. Over in the journalists' side: surprise, fright, terror. On a backdrop of suspicions, the mute game is played close to paroxysm. Thus, confrontation is imminent – and while it unfolds, while Sarafoff manages to reach the carriage with which he escapes, his wig falls off and he removes his beard. Total surprise: Sarafoff was none other than "the intelligent instruction judge". Everything was perfect: the acting, the clothes, the card he let fall, his language. Here is a judge (still an authority) who plans farces. Moreover, a registrar, now Kovaceff, accompanied him, someone whose duty is to record actions or words without interfering as the registrar is a mere clerk. However, the judge and the registrar create the real, they cause the series of events, they endow them with the test of truth. Through them, the hypothetical, with all its dose of improbability, is circumscribed to reality. Other levels? They are reflected in the ridiculousness of the journalists and the mania of sensationalism, the placement of the story in

the realm of daily affairs by the implication of the Romanian-Bulgarian conflict, the matter, worth discussing, of the point of view and of the manner in which it constitutes the decisive process of creating the story. Had he not used the successive recording of actions, had he even suggested, as an omniscient author, the possibility of a farce, any interest would have been cancelled. Thus, it is a farce about how everything can become something else owing to its shape, surface and presentation.

But more will be said on the matter of farces another time… in order to write in detail about the problem of the relationship between reality and truth, a kind of veil behind which the balance between the particular and the general hides. What is the intermediary of this problem?! It is the same instrument of journalism, which should be defined as the attempt of recording forms in a neutral fashion, as it is configured in a masterpiece of Caragialean writing, of brilliant modernism. The work in question is *Toma's Sunday*. The parody and the metatextuality, the irony and the transformation of the absence of a subject into a subject, these are some of the levels which compose the complexity of this sketch, whose roots reside in *Theme and Variations*, the sketch that completed the 1982 *Notes and sketches* volume which, let us remember, started with the two essays on Eminescu, *In Nirvana* and *Irony*. Of course, in *Theme and Variations*, the so-called mimetic dates, which suggest either the political life of the time or the journalistic mentality, are only of marginal importance, even if the original title contained the phrase *Political Varieties*. Of great importance is the pleasure of making a parody of registers so different from one another and, reduced to their essence, so unmistakable (yes, those few manners hide true characters!). The voluptuousness of creating a fabrication is supported by a special linguistic disposition, doubled by the total change of register.

After all, as an absolute master of linguistic means, Caragiale can write in any way he pleases. He is a conjurer who can reveal at any time any illusory realm. It is illusory because, being exclusively a style, and a mimicked style, everything can disappear in a moment. Which is what happens when we suspect that, also of great importance appears to be the issue of "the investigation" of truth. Of course, the title rather indicates the way in which specters substitute the truth, in a labyrinth-like zigzag. Thus, the feeling that *the theme*, which is the information from "The Universe", is the very objective truth, recorded as such, begins to topple. However, in any case, the factual information is in "The Universe"; the other newspapers contain the attitudes, commentaries and political war doubled by the worldly show. Something different occurs in *Toma's Sunday*, where the direction of fabrication continues. In short, the narrator is visiting his "brother and friend" Tomiţă on his birthday. Despite being in pain because of a toothache, he had to write a review about teeth and science. Here is the narrator, writing such a text, and slowly gliding over to the melancholic-evocative memorialistic style, with comically-masked anecdotes regarding the Church, with priests, widows, parishioner, children and teachers. A little forced sentimentality, (to reduce the excess of authentic sentimentality) about people and times long gone. What follows is not a fabricated variation, but a copied one from a text which is also his (*Resurrection Night*, the preliminary form of the short story *At Times of War*), which, in its turn, was also a copy.

Lost in meditations regarding modern time, fallen, he is awoken from his reveries by Tomiţă's "triumph", now cured. Everything is laughter in this show of brilliant intelligence and of the permutations of plans. In the space of simulation, the sentimental-nostalgic style

ends with a clear choice for the time of childhood and so, for the time of happy faith. However, Toma is the unfaithful; he only believes in the miracle of the revival of Jesus only after he sees and touches his wounds. This is what generates the question about happiness ("Jesus said to him: 'When you saw me, Toma, you believed; blessed those who did not see, but believed…'") which triggers the nostalgic stream. But childhood was the age of faith which did not need evidence. Thus St Augustus is invoked, with his renown paradox ("I believe exactly because it is absurd!"), after which the damnation of modern time and of Voltaire's illuminist spirit: "So you have come, new people, with science, to wrench from its roots this divine plant, which drew its sap from the depth of our hearts! But that was not enough for you! Over the wound in the depth of our hearts, from which it could be reborn you poured the caustic, poisonous, destructive lye, the poison of skepticism, of pessimism, of atheism!...", or: "Yes! Yes! In the abyss of faithlessness in which we are sinking, when you took away my soothing faith and gave me nothing in return but depressing skepticism, destructive doubt, my soul screams, as does the whole world's, together with the poet… together with the poet… it screams…". This is the moment of maximum ecstasy suddenly interrupted by the return of Tomita. Or course, the ecstasy is that of the style which in the end substitutes the being, with all its evocative note which re-authentified it. But, even so, the accusation against modern time is made in a mystified key; everything is anti-phrase and simulation. Rightfully speaking, Caragiale manages to make any fatality materialize in palpable mechanisms. "Knowing" should account for them as well. Returning to Augustin, Caragiale wants to touch the absurd. Regarding *the poison of skepticism*, it is obvious that something from the retrograde-restorative spirit is parodied here, the author possibly guessing some of the forms of the Romanian spirit from the coming century. He maybe foresaw Nae Ionescu blaming Europe and modern science, preaching mysticism but doing this from the most modern automobile that had ever driven on the few streets of Romania. It is not by chance that his disciples are allergic to Caragiale. In any case, we are to believe that the skeptic Caragiale, with his *destructive doubt*, gazes upon the space of the unfolding of the text with the refined voluptuousness of the playful spirit. It is because of this that, while the cured Tomita exuberantly claims a triumph for modern science, towards which the narrator himself guided him, he continues to act within the anti-modern delirium, erroneously substituting faith with his teeth: "… You took away my tooth with your science!... what have you given me in return?... give me back my tooth!... I need it!..." An error which he will happily agree to amend. Everything becomes burlesque. Yes, the theme is that of journalism: how a text on a given topic can be written, how passion and conviction can be mimicked. What is more, nothing is in contradiction: the accepted result of modern science does not contradict "the faith" in the decline of modernity, although, in the self-mocking finale, it is clear that all these are not the consequences of fanaticism. On the contrary, this attitude reveals a lucidity which makes everything relative. After all, Caragiale is a modernist who actually believes in the sufficiency of the empiric world and in gaining knowledge through the senses.

It is indisputable that this sketch is not a fable, although stories of the analogical type, such as the ones by Creangã, are not absent from Caragiale's work. It is not even a meditation. Still, no matter how well hidden it is behind the brilliant intelligence which creates epic illusions from anti-phrases, a spirit makes queries regarding the fragile balance of

the truth, which can be assumed through the senses. These queries are articulated in playful structures and in an "epic" freed from the ballast of the anecdotes. They fascinate Caragiale and do not submit to utopias, ideologies or any kind of utilitarism. Frankly, being both a skeptic and a hedonist, Caragiale does not regard literature as the chance for redemption, although, it is exactly by not endowing the fragile balance of truth with a state of crisis, that he offers the means of deceiving the abyss.

Works with the most diverse topics (and I am not referring to the exterior topic) establish themselves on the game which, beyond its satirical surface, has the crisis – and the illusion – of truth as its subject. Playfully, in the sense of permanently denouncing the processes, a denunciation for their conspicuous use, Caragiale, in *The Terrible Suicide from Fidelity Street (Groaznica sinucidere din strada Fidelităţii)*, conducts the experiment of projecting reality in interpretation. Of course, there is something from *Theme and Variations* that remains present, even if the emphasis is no longer on the voluptuousness of fabrication. In reality, the pastiche was a mere means of pulverizing the concrete, the references. But being visible, too visible, the exhibition and stripping down of the world transform this text in a playful experiment which forces the reader to become an accomplice. And this time the reader is not sophisticated or cynical in his turn, but one who is willing to collaborate. Fidelity Street, house no 13, the newspaper "The Light", and later "Aurora", the work of the young Mişu Z. on *The Symptom of Various Violent Intoxications*, all these are no longer related to the farce of the young medicine student (of the rationalist who knows the exterior secrets of the body), but to that of the author. The opening sentence, in which the narrator specifies that "buds were the favorite flowers" of Miss Portia Popescu is a simple play on words. Being too visible, apart from some ontological ambiguity, the previously conjured facts become a mere technique. It is exactly because of that that they are eloquent, making it clear that everything is artifice. Even the search for the truth is a game of interpretation.

In any case, the journey through the world as a labyrinth, searching for signs, inspired by the organic desire of constructing the self is a true obsession. It must also be mentioned that he who searches for signs also creates them. And that is not an angel, but a daemon. The signs are the consequence (or the evidence) of a sometimes cynical and, at times, playful mind which draws inspiration from the pleasure of enactment. Nonetheless, the signs should never be trusted. They always mean something more than they show, from mystification, fatality or mere cynicism. And in this enactment, the reader often becomes himself an object to be molded, prepared, provoked and fooled. Rightly speaking, Caragiale's bet does not regard the world which he creates, but the reader. Without him the world does not exist, for it manifests itself exclusively as a sensorial perception, as a stimulant of the senses or the mind. The Eminescian dichotomy between *fantasy* and *fantastery* clearly places Caragiale among the true epigones. For, if visionaries place creation in the space of imaginal worlds, as Andrei Pleşu would say, the Caragialean creations, throbbing with intelligence, seem to remain on the plane of self-aware artifice. Thus, the technique of placing reality in illusion concludes with establishing a realm of the vague, which claims to be the truth. Caragiale's world moves within these boundaries and, truth be told, all journeys, pursuits and characters' investigations occur in this space. Their pleasure for fabrication, to let themselves be driven by the inspiration of interpretation, often makes them the victims of their own imagination. Again:

he who searches for signs also creates them. It is not only once, that the hero hunts himself in the spider's web spread to capture others.

Perhaps the most relevant examples can not be found in Caragiale's plays.

However, the plays' "case" can not be overlooked, considering that in the profound structure of the drama *The Plague,* for example, the pursuit is a decisive element as it shows the way in which it establishes the world, revealing the delicate balance between reality and truth. It is well known that the play opens with a scene frequent in Caragiale's works: Dragomir, Anca and Gheorghe comment on a newspaper article; in this case, the escape of Ion the deranged. So that, the entire play develops around this character – his secondary role being just an impression – and the "dialogue" of suspicion. Anca identifies signs to obtain a confession of the truth; Dragomir tries to delay their appearance and deciphering. But these signs are different from those that lie. She suspects that the pipe, the tobacco and the flint found on Ion's person are not evidence of the truth. She understands that that facts produce confusion. That is why, she repeats it in the ending, when the belt of Ion the deranged is found in Dragomir's pocket. As a side note, the spirit of justice can not be found within this play. A matter, such as this, far from Caragiale's attention, is of interest only to capture in this case, like in many other, the secret mechanism of psychological deviance and, perhaps, the mechanical repetition of "destinies" according to rules that are hard to identify. Gheorghe himself is on the verge of entering this mechanism, which is one of killing and if he should remain an uninteresting character, this happens because he is not absorbed by the mechanism that is under investigation. The only situation that changes in this pattern of the relationship between the culprit and the victim regards Anca, the character who incorporates the reality-conjuring virtues of the investigation of the real, which are precisely those of the author. Anca is not an alter-ego, of course, Caragiale himself could not say, like Falubert, that Anca *c'est moi*. But here, she has the attributes of the one who triggers, maintains and decides the events. Still, she only does it superficially, because she is nothing more than the demon in the text. In any case, the change refers to the fact that although she, like Dragomir, plays the part of the one who knows the truth and does not interfere to materialize it, she will not be chased by anyone (not even her own nightmares) so as to re-establish the truth. What is more, not even the truth about Ion's innocence is re-established in the world of the text. After all, what is this work about? It is about a conveyance of the mystification and of the mechanisms which make this possible. And here the reproaches regarding the verisimilitude of the environment and the unauthentic psychologies are not considered.

Why is Anca the *author* only at the surface of the text? Let us return to Ion the deranged, the only one who is the embodiment of the truth. If the parallel structures between the architecture of the dramatic plays and that of the comedies were to be thoroughly sought, surprising similarities would surface. One of them is about the very appearance of Ion, who is not very different from Dandanache's. In addition, there is also the obsession for open spaces, for the circularity around the hypothetical of the events, which causes the characters to be built according to a mould. But if Dandanache arrives from the centre to confirm that the real space is nothing more than a peripheral repetition of a "model", Ion himself is identified by a central instance – Mother Mary – with the (merely apparent) goal of having the model present in the world. By wandering on the trail of a squirrel, Ion arrives where he should. And yet,

Anca's plan is diabolical. Ion becomes her victim, because no one absolves him as he continues to "be" guilty of Dumitru's death. Moreover, he remains an instrument of revenge. Let us be clear: the reader's wish to absolve him (which could be invoked) is not relevant here. Thus, what is the meaning of this mystical textual complication (and explanation) since it is nothing more than an accident in Anca's (improvised) plan? So, hesitant and slightly predictable, it is not a mystical backdrop which Caragiale proposes through the presence of the signs which bring Ion to the inn, but the simple virtual articulation of a faulty mechanism. It is obvious from this that Caragiale enjoys paradoxical situations: it is as if he is saying that the truth lies solely in the possession of the abnormal. If something can be reproached in Caragiale's drama, then the overly-emphasized presence of the author in the mechanism which he builds must be considered; if the impression, in comedies, of an illusory body of the world, which is announced by the presence of the author who is like a little demiurge, has its organic euphoria as its corollary (and a world whose identity is just an illusion can be euphoric), then in *The Trouble* (*Năpasta)*, it is unable to find an appropriate counter side. The (even pschological) terror from the drama can not support a virtual architecture. The same is true vice versa.

The conjuration of comedies in the attempt of analyzing the character's exploration of an imaginary, labyrinth-like fabric and his search for signs enters the realm of tautology; it is an assumed risk, since apart from the identification of the problem itself, the details create a marginal zone of possible queries and nuances. It also enters the realm of tautologies because, each of the four comedies establishes, in its very center, an investigative territory. Under the mask of a perfect circumscription in the realistic mimetic, *A Lost Letter* is a perfect construction with an impeccable architecture which, however, is nothing more but a comedy of morale. The shivers caused by being at the edge, at the borderline territories through which uneasiness sneaks in is missing. Even the amusement caused by language, once capable of receiving a meaning through its relevance to the ambiguity of the world which it "represents", is here only a technique. Tipatescu's letter or Catavencu's forgery, identified, do not set their adventure in the opportunity of examining the real as an illusory territory. Everything here is geometry, a photo of a structure filled in a convincing way with matter. Apart from the morals, this play lacks the "fissure" through which man can sneak out. Yet, the morals themselves have something predictable in them. However, an exception can decide on another state. It regards Dandanache and the world from which he comes: the centre. On different areas, in concentric worlds, Dandanache's world is the supreme authority, that God that who shows himself in visible, thus degraded forms. But here, the centre, through the shape it takes, is the absolute form of degradation. It is well known that Dandanache is more unintelligent than Farfuridi and a bigger scoundrel than Catavencu.

A manner of toppling known correlations is used to serve an implicit attitude. The last line, belonging to Pristanda, the side man who guarantees (or so he should) for the truth, must especially be remembered. His obedience makes any of his statements, no matter how lacking in logic, legitimate. But the last festive stammer of Catavencu becomes valid in this way: "Truly constitutional!" he cries, in the final turmoil of a regenerated world. Here, indeed, everything can restart. Time is circular, so no illusion seems capable of threatening reality. But what reality?! The one which is formulated, under the influence of alcohol, by Catavencu, which triggers Pristanda's cry. It is: "Brothers! After century-old struggles which lasted

almost thirty years, our dream has come true! What were we a short time before Crimeea? We have fought and have made progress: obscurity yesterday, light today! Bigots yesterday, today free-thinkers! Sorrow yesterday, cheerfulness today!... These are the advantages of progress! These are the benefits of a constitutional system!"

This is the reality of a lexical illusion. This is the reality of a moral verdict, which Caragiale reaches, however, with sadness. It is what did not happen, I believe, in the other comedies; or not so conspicuously. The fragile balance of the identity of the world was pungent within them. Here, as well, the stake of Caragiale's works must be thoroughly searched for – in the attempt of identifying the route towards something which could be called, with all irony, the last reality in the pure fascination of the spirit which passes through the sordidness of this labyrinth-like route.

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E. Lovinescu and the Art of Portrait

Whether it is constructed on acceptance and praise or on reserve and negation, the style of E. Lovinescu's portraits is based on concision and expressive refinement. It is, somehow, a classic style. The diarist is perhaps less preocuppied by the preciseness of his observation, than by the expressivity of sentences, by the sobre authenticity of the notations, by the clarity and coherence of the utterances as well as by the delight of representing the revelatory detail.

E. Lovinescu's criticist approach is basically one that inherits the French criticist school, in the descendence of Lemaitre (who thought that criticism was „l'art de jouir des livres") or A. France, epicureans to whom he owes the natural modulations of a personal temper and sensibility. The impressionist method is especially relevant by the horror of an hermetically closed system, for the lack of adherence to cannon and rigid forms, for the anti-dogmatic attitude that can be identified, directly or implicitly, in Lovinescu's criticism. From his point of view, the substance of the work of art, which is by its plural nature diffused, cannot be assumed by some exclusivist concepts, too rigid, too abstract to circumscribe in the most genuine way the living, irreducible reality of the work of art. On the contrary, literary criticism must appeal to the sentiment, to the feeling, assuming intuition and an empathic disposition, featuring mobility and refinement. In this order, E. Lovinescu's criticism may be defined in the terms of a relative balance between the refinement spirit and the geometric one. By all this features found in an optimal dose, the critic gains access to the interior universe of the work of art, goes through its most profound modulations, without aggressing or falsifying in any way its conformation. Thus, in a certain way, criticism re-creates its object, since it takes the initiative and creatively enriches it on behalf of the data in the critic consciousness. The impressionist method to which he subscribes at the beginning opposes the dogmatic judgment, the dictatorial rationalization of the literary work, as well as to the exhaustion of its meanings by the appliance of too strict conceptual models. Such a method does not aspire to completely explain the structures of the work but, on the contrary, recognizes with a sort of modesty its skeptic vocation, basically assuming its own limits and an inherent relativity of the assertions. Critic impressionism results, in Lovinescu's view, from two complementary operations which are, nevertheless, distinctive – an operation of impression simplification and by reducing it to "essential elements of an idea" and an operatio of contouring the ability of expression of the literary work.

Lovinescu's criticism therefore assumes the study of the work by a pre-existant and ferm adherence to its intimate structure – it focuses on the anexation of the work not by the idea, by the concept, but by the mobile intuition, that is alive, able to accomplish the consonance, the consubstantiality of the two poles of the equation of reception: creative consciousness / receiving consciousness. It is from the interdependence of the two poles that the literary work is born. Also related to E. Lovinescu's impressionist method is the so disputed problem of his „revisions", a problem that may find its plausible explanation only by being connected to the theory of esthetic value mutations, according to which esthetic values have a chrono-topic existence and, while progressing in time and leaving the epoch when they

were created, they gradually degrade their meanings and semantic resources. Another factor of the relativity in these values is represented by the receiving consciousness, as it is in evolution, in a continuous psychological development. We must notice, on the other hand, that E. Lovinescu's criticism is not the result of a spontaneous generation. It is unconceivable outside the idea of continuity, of integration in the frames of a Romanian critic tradition, and that it must be considered from the perspective of a fracture, of a mutation from the past. These are, in fact, the terms in the absence of which the equation represented by Lovinescu's work cannot be solved: continuity and fracture. The continuity may very easily be seen in relation with Titu Maiorescu's works, who's descendant Lovinescu considers himself to be, especially on the subject of the specificity of the esthetic, a subject Maiorescu had also approached and that forms the basis of Lovinescu's criticism. The fracture is noticeable in Lovinescu's theory of imitation, a theory which corrects Maiorescu's theory of the forms without content but, also, in terms of fracture we may define the critic's fracture with the criticism of Gherea, N. Iorga or Ibraileanu, which somehow took the literary work out of the esthetic principle's domination, measuring it with improper tools of a sociologic kind and so on. And therefore alienating its essence. Lovinescu moves the accent on the esthetic factor, reintegrating the literary work in its most personal space, the only able to offer it chances of survival.

The sovereign principle of the autonomy of the esthetic and ethnic represents an ideological imperative with the most important consequences for the evolution of Lovinescu's criticism. Above all, Lovinescu notices, following Titu Maiorescu, that the problem of morality in art is in fact a false problem: a work of art is immoral only if it is not esthetically valid. The work of art's "morality" is only measurable on the terms of its esthetic accomplishment, and not on the basis of some conceptual tools which are foreign to the domain of literary art. Nevertheless, a content based on ethnic values validates esthetically a literary work, because, as the critic underlines: „etnicul poate fi un determinant estetic în sensul limitării virtualităţilor estetice ale unei rase la anumite forme sau moduri de expresie, dar nu se confundă cu însuşi esteticul", which is „categorie specifică a sensibilităţii omeneşti ce se dezvoltă în cadre şi în material etnic, dar se conduce după legi proprii". The ethnic, as well as the ethic, are therefore improper for an Aesthetics of the work of art, because they are of a different essence. From the postulation of the theory of the esthetic results, thus, the consequence of literary work evaluation exclusively determined by thei intrinsic esthetic modulation, in the absence of intrusion of inefficient other criteria.

The concept of modernism holds, for Lovinescu, obvious new accents, which cannot be delimited or explained without using other of his theses. First of all, this concept must be connected to the theory of synchronism, defined in *Istoria civilizaţiei române moderne / The History of Modern Romanian Civilisation*, a theory that refines and corrects Maiorescu's theory of the forms without content. Due to the interferences, the correspondance between cultures (and we sense here a certain polemic accent towards Spengler, who had argued that it is isolation and not communication that represents the fundamental functioning law of cultures), the phenomenon of developed cultures imitation by low amplitude cultures becomes even more necessary as the mass-communication means develop. The result of imitation is a certain uniformity, a sort of cultural entropy, a tendency to equalize the conceptual horizon of

an epoch: „Cu mijloacele de răspândire instantanee ale timpurilor moderne, puterea de difuziune a imitaţiei a devenit aproape nelimitată. Iată pentru ce caracteristica epocii noastre e tendenţa de generalizare şi de uniformizare a obiceiurilor şi instituţiilor". In a first stage, imitation is integral, and further on, with the accentuation of the process of cultural development it becomes a selective criterion, determined by the inner needs and realities. But Lovinescu argues that the forms, values, dimensions of a culture suffer an adaptation, a deformation dictated by the social-historical background of the culture. These cultural values are only partially reflected, as the phenomenon is mainly one of cultural refraction:: „trecând de la un mediu etnic la altul, ideea se refractă: unghiul de refracţie constituie originalitatea fiecărui popor". The imitative process is composed of *integrality and rase adaptation* „mecanismul oricărei imitaţii revoluţionare se descompune, însă, în două elemente esenţiale: în transplantarea integrală a invenţiei şi, apoi, în prelucrarea ei prin adaptări la spiritul rasei". Along with imitation, Lovinescu also speaks of a „spirit of centuries", *saeculum* (as Tacitus used to call it), which would be:"o totalitate de condiţii materiale şi morale configuratoare ale vieţii popoarelor europene într-o epocă dată". In the synchronization to this "spirit of the century" the concept of modernism finds its appropriate expression and configuration. As a matter of fact, modernism represents, for E. Lovinescu, the very literary expression of synchronism and circumscribes the meaning of literary evolution towards a double renewal, both on the thematic and expressive level. Generally speaking, modernism is seen as a progressive movement, marking and ascending direction in the field of literature and irreducible to one or the other modernist concepts. The concept of modernism integrates the other modernist movements, passing through them and at the same time dominating them. Modernism may be compared to a flux that unifies and models works, creative personalities and stylistic paradigms, regardless of their belonging to a movement or the other, as long as the movement itself is synchronous to the "spirit of the century", a fact that is also noted by E. Simion, among others: „Modernismul nu e, aşadar, un curent literar, nu are, ca simbolismul, o doctrină estetică unitară. Scriitorii de la *Sburătorul* acoperă aproape întreg spaţiul stilistic al literaturii interbelice. Unii sunt simbolişti, alţii ermetici sau extremişti, fantezişti, ori descriptivi şi realişti". Conceptualized in his critical studies, modernism is found, reconfigured, in Lovinescu's memories, as an underground flux of ideas which animates the text, offers new connotations to it, reveals its original dimensions.

The autobiographical discourse is part of the marginal literary genres, by its expressive aspects which place it on the limit of fiction and nonfiction but also by its relative freedom compared with the other literary types and genres. Based, naturally, on the resources of autospecularity, the diary has a bipolar geography: on one side it assumes the risk of recording the more or less evident movement of the creative ego under the regime of sincerity while on the other side it takes the privilege of noting the exterior reality's data, of surprising the portraits of the contemporary personalities, of replaying gestures, events, scenes witnessed or experienced by the author. It is this bipolar register of mechanisms responsible for the autobiographic discourse that creates the polymorphism of the genre, which is hard to frame in a certain stylistic or discoursive category, and has fluctuating conceptual limits and extremely mobile knowledge guidelines. The autobiographical discourse absorbs in its texture the subjectivity and the refferentiality that contour the existence of the author. From the dynamics of this dialectics of seen aspects and unseen aspects, of the text and subtext, of the

immediate reality and an affectivity retracted in interiority results, as a matter of fact, the exceptional dynamics of this type of discourse. At the same time, the identity between the auctorial ego and the narrator is absolute and undisputable. A discourse with fragile boundaries and inconstant guidelines, legitimated by a poetics of the fragmentary and randomization, the autobiographical discourse assumes its condition exactly by using a sum of limitations and nuances which regain its physiognomy and form in all their semantic richness.

E. Lovinescu, the most important promoter of modernism in Romanian literature and culture, discussed the autobiographical genre in his critical reflections. In a paragraph entitled significantly *Primejdiile şi limitările memorialisticei contemporane / The Dangers and Limitations of Contemporary Diarism*, Lovinescu draws the specific features of this type of literature by noting the limits and limitations assumed by the genre: „Scop ultim al oricărei literaturi memorialistice, interesul documentar îşi găseşte o limitare în însăşi limitarea personalităţii sociale a scriitorului; scoasă dintr-o experienţă strictă, ea nu poate acoperi decât o arie restrânsă de cunoaştere şi de raporturi, fără posibilităţile de transcendere ale literaturii de creaţiune în care, când nu-l născoceşte pe de-a-ntregul, scriitorul îşi intensifică în voie elementul prim al experienţei sale; suprapusă strict pe realitate, memorialistica se configurează, aşadar, pe fapte şi experienţe fatal reduse şi ca număr şi ca importanţă, întrucât, cu lipsa ei de acţiune socială, viaţa scriitorilor evoluează într-un cerc de abstracţii ideologice, de preocupări profesionale şi de mărunţişuri cotidiane destul de neînsemnate pentru a nu solicita unda curiozităţii publice". Alongside these ineluctable limits, related to the very condition of the diaristic text, this type of discourse is threatened by the danger represented by the susceptibility of the contemporaries which are to recognize themselves in the pages, not exactly in the most favorable colors. The remedy of this kind of danger is the impartiality of the perspective, the impersonality of perception and the equidistance of the stylistic register: „Faţă de astfel de limitări şi de primejdii izvorâte din însuşi genul memorialistic, ca şi din insuficienţa materialului, nu există decât o singură atitudine posibilă: purificarea prin despersonalizare şi prin acordarea unei demnităţi literare ce-i lipseşte, altfel, din provenienţă. Orice operă de artă porneşte de la un material amorf şi cenuşiu, valabil numai prin prelucrarea lui în substanţă estetică; viaţa literară a unei ţări nu e atât de lipsită de elemente prime pentru a nu putea fi elaborată în artă; puţin interesantă în sine şi nu departe de a părea abuzivă chiar, anecdota măruntă poate fi ridicată la o semnificaţie apreciabilă prin valoarea sa psihologică; şi, purificată de toate reziduurile prin impersonalizare, poate fi înălţată la demnitatea faptelor zămislite sub semnul neclintit al esteticului".

In E. Lovinescu's *Memorii / Memories* all these servitudes and benefices are seen clearly in this type of writing that is ambivalent, reflecting the assessment of the interiority and the radiography of exterior data, of a dynamic and contradictory reality. From the pages of diary written by the critic there is no image of an Olympian temper to be found. On the contrary, these are pages animated by a polemic instinct, marked by the author's idiosyncrasies, touched by the pamphletary nerve of a writer who often contradicts his declared need of impersonality and temperance while evoking his contemporaries. The subjectivity in the text of his memories is in fact the latent expressive resource which offers the discourse seductive force, authenticity and fascination. It is obvious that, read today, many of the asperities have lost almost completely their impact and acuity; only an evoking

vibrance resists, the author's will of plasticizing a certain temperamental feature, of revealing events and facts that are revelatory for the ambiance of the epoch he had lived in.

Ileana Vrancea, in *E. Lovinescu. Artistul / E. Lovinescu. The Artist* considers that Lovinescu's *Memorii* preserve their status and viability not by the rigor of the document or by the authentic revelation of some existential contexts but by the expressivity of the portraits: „Dacă, în general, *Memoriile* rămân nu prin autenticitatea documentului – contemporanii criticului au demonstrat-o suficient – ci prin arta portretistică, învestitura maximă care li s-a acordat îndeobşte a putut fi perfect justificată, la data apariţiei volumelor, pentru noutatea genului la noi; dar adevărata artă portretistică a moralistului, descărcată de digresiunile unei anecdotici nu întotdeauna semnificative, de decorativitatea unei copleşitoare inflaţii imagistice declanşate după un mecanism-tip, se dezvăluie desăvârşită, în formele cele mai pure, nu în ocolişurile şerpuitoare ale memorialistului, prin «mărăcinişuri spinoase», unde poliţa trebuie plătită la adăpostul «strictei imparţialităţi», unde materia se împrăştie şi seva se diluează; ci în blocurile unitare, tăiate în piatră dură, din care omul şi opera se nasc printr-o lovitură de maestru şi capătă viaţă sub privirile fascinante ale unui Pygmalion, desprins de veninurile şi complezenţele pământeşti şi captat doar de torsul stelelor. Un asemenea gen de portrete există şi în *Memorii*, dar nu el dă tonul; cei trei Caragiale, Sadoveanu – ca să pomenim doar câteva – fac parte din familia de spirite, prezentă parţial în *Figurine*, destul de frecventă în *Critice*, în cele cinci volume de *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*; ea domină însă ciclul de studii junimiste – monografia *Titu Maiorescu*, cele două volume din *Titu Maiorescu şi contemporanii lui* şi ajunge la apogeu în *Antologia scriitorilor ocazionali*".

A certain delay may be noticed between the declarations of the critic and the observations of the portraitist, a fact that is also remarked by Ileana Vrancea. The conclusion of the critical perception do not always coincide with those of the diarist, but, on the contrary, in many situations there is a lack of concordance between the two types of assessment. Such examples of incongruence are represented by Mateiu I. Caragiale, Mihail Sadoveanu or Camil Petrescu, writers who are seen totally different in the critical studies and in the pages of diary. Lovinescu excels, therefore, in his *Memories*, in the technique of portrait, which is extremely suggestive and plastic, capturing people in their characteristic background, in the relevance of their temper but also in the dynamics of their interior evolution. It is obviously a psychological portrait, based on the psychological reactions, but not avoiding the details, the atmosphere surrounding the figures of the contemporaries. The pitoresque and the anecdotic have a remarkable function if the configuration of the portraits: they put the characters in a social and artistic background and offer them color and form, a personal identity drawn from the consonance between the character and the background.

A frequently used technique is that of Balzacian descent in space and time, but also of surprising a type of temperament in its living movement, in the dynamism of the immediate reaction, in its psychological and affective nudity. The beginning of the chapter dedicated to Ion Barbu is very relevant, as in it the precise and at the same time baroque notation of the atmospheric climate interweaves with the evoking description and with the description of a human type in its primordial movements, recorded with a prompt sensitive acuity. The scenic dynamism, the expositive feature or the pregnancy of the revelatory detail are also part of this chapter:: „Pe când sub ploaia putredă a toamnei, ce unea cerul şi cu pământul spongios într-un giulgiu lichid, fanfarele dolente ale marşului funebru duceau rămăşiţele lui Vlahuţă, uşa

biroului meu s-a deschis pentru a face loc unui tânăr subţiratic, tip oriental, smolit, cu ochii, după cum s-a spus, vegetali, de plante acvatice, cu pasul precipitat şi decis. Se numea «Popescu», era poet, şi-mi întinse un caiet cu aparenţe sumare, pe a cărui primă pagină se citea: *Copacul*. Abia începui să descifrez câteva versuri când, nervos, luându-şi scaunul de la locul său, tânărul şi-l împlântă cu energie lângă fotoliul meu pe care, cu priviri laterale, îl trăsei puţin la o parte; tânărul se apropie din nou cu insistenţă: scenă clasică de teatru, de dominaţie sau de intimidare. Citii o poezie, două, trei: versuri parnasiene, dure, lapidare, ceva din Heredia, din Leconte de Lisle, pe fondul frenetic al lui Nietzsche, cu un material verbal personal şi o tăietură energică. Aveam în faţă un poet căruia îi mai lipsea doar un pseudonim". Ion Barbu's Portrait, starting under these narative-dramatic conditions, is developed and fulfilled by the insertion of characterial observations and moral-affective assessments. The portrait becomes, in this moment of development, an axiological one:: „Omul nu s-ar putea spune că e comod. Acum, după treisprezece ani de raporturi variate, cu inexplicabile soluţii de continuitate, după ce de atâtea ori ne-au prins razele oblice ale soarelui în exaltări poetice, în calmul biroului meu, sau pe aleile Cişmigiului, în apoteozele primăverii, n-aş putea să nu confirm că omul nu e comod. Nu e comod, mai întâi, prin inegalitatea de umoare şi, deci, prin lipsa unităţii de reacţiune, ceea ce imprimă o basculare reacţiilor în nesiguranţa continuităţii; nu e comod prin irascibilitate şi agresivitate, prin atitudini tiranice şi exclusive, cum ar fi un antisemitism intempestiv afirmat sau o necesitate de respectabilitate ostentativ proclamată cu orice ocazie: nu e comod, dar cât e de interesant!".

But the usage of anecdote and narrative digression is not always salutary for the success of Lovinescu's portraits. When the notation of physical features, dense, sober, but detailed, meets the moralist aspect of the phrase, the psychological geography and the illustrative scene, the portrait gains pregnancy and expressiveness, affective color and the most appropriate tone. There are some portraits in which the infusions of lyrism are dominant and the notations have a more pronounced metaphorical tendency; the flow of memory amplifies the affective vibration of the phrase and the verb develops the volutes of a too evident subjectivity. Such a portrait is that of Ilarie Voronca, where, around a dominant feature – the lack of initiative, excessive timidity, the critic creates, by an accumulation of epithets, an agglutinating and at the same time lyric portrait while connecting the man's psychology with his works: „Substanţa adevărată a psihologiei poetului se poate descifra în *Restrişti*: un suflet timid, nostalgic, sentimental, răvăşit, descompus, suflet legat de ţară, de pământ, inactual, inutil, cu voinţi dizolvate în veleităţi, cu entuziasmuri puerile, gingaşe şi preţioase, concepând de altfel şi meschinăria, dar inapt în a o realiza sau dându-i, fără să vrea, o candoare ce o face inocuă; suflet moldovenesc (...), risipit în vânt ca o scamă de păpădie, suflet de toamnă şi de învins, incapabil de acţiune şi de iniţiativă, suflet de Mărculescu şi nu de Marcus, râvnind să devină funcţionar român, cu ore de serviciu fixe, comod, ierarhic, tremurând la deschiderea uşii, şi cu aspiraţia ascunsă de a fi înscris la bătrâneţe în cartea de aur a pensionarilor români (...). Voronca al nostru, păpădia risipită la vânt, funigelul călător la cea mai mică adiere, iepurele de casă ascuns sub foaia de varză, prefăcut într-un războinic cu pistoale la brâu, cu chivără şi cu paloşe în mâini şi în dinţi! Minunată putere bovarică de a te proiecta altfel decât cum eşti!".

There are, in the gallery of Lovinescu's portraits, some character drafts in which perception totally changes its perspective and dimensions, the serenity and personality turning into incisiveness and polemic tendency. Vasile Parvan's portrait is one of this cases: the cold, lucid perspective of the critic finds, behind the exterior reactions and behavior of the scholar the hidden features of his personality, those psychological and affective dominances which mobilize his energies and intellectual and moral resorts. Lovinescu uses synthetic expressions, enumerations of specific details, some drawn in irony, some in full pregnancy:: „Un inconformism sufletesc categoric ne-a precizat de la primele noastre întâlniri o poziţie de ostilitate, tacită sau pe faţă, după împrejurări, păstrată, de altfel, fără întrerupere, intactă de nu şi activă; inteligent, studios, dar, mai presus de orice, ambiţios şi orgolios până la dezumanizare, ipnotizat în voinţa excluzivă de a se afirma şi ajunge, superior înarmat, aşadar, în arena existenţii, el se prezenta, în schimb, cu totul dezarmat în faţa unui om lipsit de dorinţa de a poza sau parveni, desfăcut de prejudecăţi academice, de un diletantism, care, prin faptul independenţii morale şi materiale, îşi putea permite o libertate de vorbă fără altă frână decât cea a bunului-simţ (...) Pârvan reprezenta un exemplu pregnant de «pitiatism», adică de obiectivare a voinţii prin simpla forţă de sugestie, de persuasiune, obiectivare capabilă de a se transforma, în ordinea biologică, în adevărate epidemii (...)".

In Parvan's portrait it is not only the moral-intellectual features of the scholar that are underlined (the massive will, the subordination of all spiritual resources for the accomplishment of the purpose, the necessary imperative of intellectual soberness, "the powerful will of becoming"); Lovinescu also expresses some stylistic observations on Parvan's works which, beyond their scientific aspect, are written in a prolix style, maked by pathetic images, by an excessively rhetoric tonality and a phraseology that is often disarticulated: „nemulţumiţi numai cu activitatea lui ştiinţifică şi, mai ales, cu organizaţia ei, unii din ucenicii lui şi alţi câţiva mistici de după război, ortodocşi sau nu, au încercat să găsească în Pârvan un reazim ideologic, văzând în el un filosof şi un mare scriitor. N-aş voi să mă rostesc asupra misticei lui Pârvan, întrucât lipsa de aderenţă faţă de o astfel de atitudine sufletească nu-mi lasă minimul de simpatie de care e nevoie pentru a fi judecător util şi imparţial; cât despre cugetarea lui filosofică, ea este o simplă banalitate, mascată sub o insuportabilă grandilocvenţă stilistică. *Formele istorice* şi *Memoriale* reprezintă, de fapt, modele intolerabile de patetism verbal, de beţie de cuvinte, locurile comune ale reflecţiei asupra vieţii, învăluite într-o frazeologie bombastică, cu aere inspirate şi mistice, ce puteau impresiona pe doamnele şi pe tinerii din jurul catedrei lui, dar nu rezistă unei elementare analize a bunului-simţ".

A considerable part in Lovinescu's *Memories* is occupied by Nicolae Iorga's personality, who is hard to draw in a single portrait; the critic uses the so-called biographic portrait, suprising the character features of a personality in its interior and exterior development, in the dynamics of its diachronic evolution. The great historian's profile is contoured by integrating it in a particular existential context but also by summing the psychological data into a portrait made of ambivalent elements, in which the admiration and contestation interweave, a fact that was also remarked by Eugen Simion, who also notices the recurrence of some portraits: „Unele *portrete* revin. Imaginea lui T. Maiorescu, de pildă, obsedează pe E. Lovinescu. Ceva scapă totdeauna criticului şi, în alt capitol, el revine la schiţa portretului dinainte. Tot aşa, N. Iorga, figura biblică a literaturii lui Lovinescu. Faţă de marele

istoric, criticul are sentimentul pe care îl aveau, probabil, primii creştini faţă de Dumnezeu: o credinţă plină de spaimă. Chiar şi atunci când îl detestă (în sens critic), negaţia e, la Lovinescu, stăpânită de admiraţie. Imaginea ce traduce mai bine acest sentiment e aceea a unui N. Iorga – arhanghel cu biciul de foc alungând fariseii şi zarafii din templu". Iorga's authority over the generation Lovinescu was part of is beyond any doubt and recognized by the critic. The passages in the *Memories* describing the beginnings of Iorga's activity fully use the rhetoric of the epopee, with a visionary tendency of the phrase, with a hyperbolic dimension of the figures and a titanian confrontation between old and new. By such a projection in enormous and visionary, Iorga's figure gains a prophetic status, of a teacher with overwhelming authority, but also of an iconoclast of values with a pre-established and diminished prestige:: „Pe la 1900, d. N. Iorga se impunea atenţiei tinerimii prin două aspecte: pe de o parte, un neobosit adunător de documente, cu o autoritate misterioasă şi necontrolabilă şi cu un ciclu de legende asupra activităţii şi memoriei sale; pe de alta, un iconoclast al valorilor consacrate. Totul i se părea superficial în instituţiile noastre culturale: în Universitate, la Academie, la Ateneu, totul era de reformat; cu alte mijloace, el voia să repete lupta lui Maiorescu împotriva formei fără fond. Tocilescu, Urechia, Hasdeu continuau, în unele privinţi, generaţia de la 1848, cu o ştiinţă, desigur, alta, dar cu aceleaşi metode; departe de a fi intrat în faza pozitivă, vegetam într-un romantism ştiinţific, creând forme înainte de a fi venit fondul; insistând mai puţin în exagerarea patriotică, deoarece Maiorescu o înfrânase, amestecam încă sentimentul naţional în toate manifestările culturale". The portrit of the man seems to be extended in the architecture of his overwhelming works, in the vaste horizons with a luxuriant spiritual geography proposed by Iorga's works.

In the configuration of Nicolae Iorga's portrait, Lovinescu also uses a technique of correspondences and parallelisms, in which the temperamental data and intellectual features of the historian are compared to those of Maiorescu. The role of the two in the reformation of Romanian culture is, somehow similar: „După douăzeci de ani, tânărul istoric continua, aşadar, opera distructivă a criticului de la Iaşi şi, de nu avea autoritatea lui Maiorescu, avea verva, pasiunea, tinereţea comunicativă şi stăruinţa de a reveni asupra aceluiaşi lucru, neobosit, lovind şi dărâmând – spectacol impresionant al unei adevărate gigantomahii intelectuale; trăiam în crepusculul zeilor. Departe de noi, zeii lui Maiorescu ne interesau mai puţin, pe când zeii profesorului nostru erau zeii la care ne închinasem şi noi: ne bucuram, deci, văzându-i rostogolindu-se de pe socluri. Trecea duhul răzbunării deasupra măririlor şi din ruina lor speram poate să ne înălţăm noi, din instinctul obscur ce aduce pe tineri în jurul catastrofei înaintaşilor. Se prăbuşeau Tocilescu, Urechia, Xenopol şi chiar Hasdeu, se despica pământul; în bubuitul tunetelor, din rotocoalele de fum şi în mirosul de pucioasă se desprindea, totuşi, încetul cu încetul, o nouă statuă ridicată din sfărămiturile celorlalte". Lovinescu also makes use, in the pages dedicated to Nicolae Iorga, to the expressive resources of the synthetic portrait, in which the concission of the expressions meets the pregnancy of moral notation or the incisivness of psychological observation:: „Ca şi în Ion Eliade-Rădulescu şi în B.P. Hasdeu – şi în N. Iorga stăpânea, de fapt, acelaşi suflet neastâmpărat, proteic, vast, fără o adâncime egală, răzvrătit, cu un fond totuşi conservator, de un romantism neînfrânat, războinic şi neconsecvent, egocentric până la diformitate, devorat de imaginaţie şi

de ambiţie, capabil de avânturi mari, dar scoborându-se la micimi, suflet transfuzibil ce nu se recunoaşte pe sine de câte ori apare sub un nou înveliş terestru".

Uunder the auspice of typological diversity of E. Lovinescu's portraits, it is nevertheless interesting to see the portrait of Mateiu I. Caragiale, revealed by underlining his belonging to a "family of spirits". The technique of finding filiations, of recovering relations and correspondences determined by a certain literary heredity is predominant here. The interior face of Mateiu is also drawn from these permanent parallelisms and filiations with his father's temperament and personality. Lovinescu underlines this: „Matei moştenise ceea ce, considerat numai în rezultate, se numeşte sterilitate, iar privit şi în cauze ia numele de înaltă conştiinţă artistică (...). Originea sterilităţii stă, probabil, în natura instrumentului psihic, în lipsa de îmbucare a cine ştie căror resorturi. Aprig în critica societăţii în care a trăit, bătrânul i s-a adaptat totuşi cu exces (...). La Matei, combustiunea forţelor sufleteşti s-a făcut întrucâtva altfel. Nu moştenise nimic din sociabilitatea, din nevoia de a fi în tovărăşie numeroasă, în continuă reprezentaţie, din verva tatălui său, risipite în faţa unei galerii mute de admiraţie. Era mai mult un nesociabil, un singuratec, cu aparenţe ursuze şi posomorâte. Numai între prieteni, în intimitate, reapărea demonul părintesc al elocinţei şi al paradoxului. Ca şi la bătrânul Ion, ca şi la fratele său Luca, la temelia minţii lui Matei stăpânea o memorie uluitoare şi dezordonată de autodidact fără alegere, cu apucături enciclopedice, dar mai ales îndreptată în domeniul trecutului şi al inutilului. Inconformismul lui nu era numai teoretic, ca la tatăl său, ci integral. Matei n-a fost numai un revoltat, ci şi un învins (...). Încă de mult îşi crease un personaj exterior şi interior, izolat şi singular; nu ştiu întrucât şi-l studia, dar îl realizase definitiv. Închis în el, cu aerele zbârlite ale unui arici retractat, cu absenţă distantă, cu râie fanariotă acoperită de blazon bizantin, împăunat chiar în vremea când era silit să apară fără cea mai simplă decenţă vestimentară, ceremonios şi protocolar, timid pentru că era orgolios peste măsură, sau orgolios ca să nu pară pea timid, cu fumuri nobilitare împrăştiate din pipele iluziei, cu preocupări de lucruri rare, subtile şi inutile, cu risipă de cunoştinţe prezentate sub forma paradoxului mistificator al tatălui său, în faţa căruia competenţa oricui amuţea – Matei realizase un personaj pe care îl voia numai aristocratic, deşi era mai mult curios, ciudat, punct de plecare a unor legende în care, poate, mitomania lui esenţială se satisfăcea. În artă, în afară de sterilitate – sau înaltă conştiinţă artistică – el moştenise de la tatăl său, şi cultul formei, dragostea cuvântului".

Maiorescu's portrait is a proof of the spiritual and expression classicism poured by Lovinescu in the characteriologic frames of the profiles in *Memories.* Without abusing the figures, and also refusing the excess of exactitude and the inflammation of the tone, the critic rebuilds, in the austere gesticulation of the phrase, the effigy-portrait of the Junimea's mentor, by illustrating his dominant features: optimism, Olympian balance, harmony: „Maiorescu a impus epocei nu atât prin noutatea cugetării, nici prin hărnicia investigaţiei, întrucât epicureismul intelectual era unul din aspectele acestui olimpian, ci prin seninătatea şi cumpătarea cugetării, prin ascendentul moral şi prin incomparabilul talent de a săpa în marmura cuvintelor ca un statuar antic; a mai impus prin armonia definitivă ce se desprindea din întreaga lui personalitate, prin adaptarea gestului la gând, a vieţii practice la teorie, prin euritmia formei şi a fondului, prin incisivitate şi seninătate; a mai impus şi prin optimismul voluntar al oamenilor superiori, clădit pe fundament de pesimism, nu optimismul nătângilor ce se încordează spre bunurile aparente ale vieţii, ci optimismul omului speculativ ce a dat la

o parte vălul Maei, scrutând insondabilul tragic al destinului omenesc. Nu e om superior fără această viziune pesimistă; dar nu e om mare şi folositor, care să nu se reculeagă la timp din ameţeala vidului, pentru a-şi afirma voinţa de a fi şi de a dura în faţa neantului şi caducităţii universale. Pilda unui astfel de optimism ne-a dat-o Maiorescu, întrucât, pe temelia unei dezabuzări totale, a ridicat afirmaţia principală a adevărului şi binelui". But Lovinescu also draws here the oratoric qualities of Maiorescu: the studied theatric art, the Olympian calm, the retained gesticulation („În astfel de condiţii de formaţie spirituală, se înţelege de la sine sporul de prestigiu pe care-l câştiga Maiorescu asupra noastră prin acţiunea cursurilor sale universitare, cu dicţiunea lui impecabilă, susţinută de o gesticulaţie expresivă, cu fluidul autorităţii desprins din armonia întregei lui fiinţe morale şi fizice. Oratoria lui conţinea, negreşit, şi un element teatral, un element arhitectural, prin dispoziţia ordonată şi migălos studiată, în care se desfăşura: pe ultima bătaie a ceasului din peretele din faţă cădea şi ultima vorbă a oratorului, cu graţia unei volute perfect încheiate, dar şi cu satisfacţia unei demonstraţii perfect reuşite, fără deviaţia unei miimi de secundă").

In drawing the portratis of the younger writers Lovinescu had supported, we find the same virtues of diaristic prose: rigor and expressive plasticity, the magic of lyric and evoking discourse, the pleasure of detailed description, the air of severity in which some deviations and temperamental exaggerations are contoured. Such an illustrative portrait is that of Camil Petrescu, a portrait built in several moments. First of all, the critic establishes a first image of the writer, that is somehow neutral, by using notations which surprise the reading of a play:: „Imaginea scriitorului începe să mi se fixeze, prin unele trăsături psihologice, abia mai târziu, în primele luni ale *Sburătorului*, în cadrul lecturii piesei sale *Jocul ielelor*, într-un amurg de mai, sub lăncile înroşite ale soarelui asasinat în dreptul ferestrelor largi ale biroului meu. Lipsa de autoritate a cititorului, nervozitatea lui sporită de intrările şi ieşirile ascultătorilor, nu i-au dat lecturii caracterul de succes categoric aşteptat, se vede, cu certitudine; mai contribuiau, de altfel, şi defectele piesei, evidente şi mai târziu, după câţiva ani, la o nouă lectură, când nu mai putea fi vorba de lipsa de autoritate şi de nervozitate. Cu indulgenţă de sine, naturală, de altfel, tuturor începătorilor, cititorul nu-şi explica însă «insuccesul» decât prin insuficienţa lecturii; un semiton mai sus sau mai jos, o mlădiere a glasului, o tăcere prelungită ar fi dat cu totul altă putere de contagiune paginilor citite. Certitudinea părea încă de atunci a lua forme de nemulţumire vexată, amorţită, ce e dreptul, de o umbră de timiditate, dispărută repede (...)". A second moment of the portrait plays with much more precision the characteriologic data of the young writer: „În afară de aceste lecturi, Camil Petrescu se distingea şi prin spiritul său vioi, mobil, combativ, agresiv chiar, destul de informat, dar mai ales dialectic, inepuizabil dialectic, luminat totuşi de o candoare plăcută cu deosebire femeilor, de o frăgezime de impresie binevenită într-o societate, prin convenienţe, mai mult receptivă decât deliberativă. Şi cum ne aflam pe atunci într-o fază poetică, cu valuri de versuri, prezenţa scriitorului era şi mai binevenită prin simţul critic al poeziei, destul de rar, simţ, firește, de poet, adică unilateral, în sensul formulei proprii, dar rapid; după o singură aruncare de privire peste un manuscris, el îşi formula părerea, precisă, categorică, definitivă, dacă nu şi întemeiată, reversibilă la o concepţie hotărâtă, cu o reacţiune unică, adică esenţa însăşi a autorităţii critice, ajutată şi de posibilitatea susţinerii ei cu o pasiune rară în domeniul criticei, expus diletantismului unora şi laşităţii de opinie a celor mai mulţi". The third moment

of the portrait brings a change of tone and register to the phrase; the neutral posture is substituted here by the offensive assertion, by the incisive expression, underlining a non-idilic portrait of the author of *Jocul ielelor*, a play that illustrates, in Lovinescu's view, some spiritual and intellectual failures of balance: „Din nu ştiu ce tenebre misterioase ale inconştientului s-a prăvălit, aşadar, crescând, petricica abia pecrecptibilă la început, luând cu ea forţele reale ale acestei inteligenţe vii şi desfăşurându-şi episoadele pe un fond de beatitudine agresivă. Când strănută, Camil priveşte în jur cu satisfacţia unei acţiuni inedite; orice ai face, a fost făcut mai întâi de dânsul şi orice idei ai exprima, a fost exprimată de dânsul într-un vechi articol de cel puţin cinci ani. E nu numai cel dintâi în timp, dar şi cel dintâi în valoare; e cel mai mare ziarist şi polemist, e cel mai mare dramaturg şi critic dramatic; e cel mai mare poet şi critic literar, e omul cel mai inteligent – totul fără mlădiere, fără uşorul zâmbet de ironie sau glumă, sub faldurile căruia se strecoară uşure orice prezumţie, ci categoric, definitiv, repetat pe un ton iritat, agresiv, dispus oricând să o dovedească dialectic şi la nevoie să rupă relaţiile personale (...). Articolele lui sunt totdeauna definitive: înalţă sau scoboară, lansează sau distrug; în discuţie are pentru orice o teorie, teoria chibritului, fireşte, nou-nouţă, potrivit serviciului cauzei; lipsa unui nasture de la vestă se preface, astfel, după circumstanţă, într-o necesitate cosmică sau într-un semn de superioritate intelectuală (...). Şi ar fi şi timpul ca omuleţul acesta pripit, iritat, pururi grăbit, cu privirea în jos, ca şi cum ar căuta ceva pierdut, cu podul palmei aprins, incendiat de febre, hărţăgos, plin de talent, dar şi de fatuitate, să se oprească din cursa lui frenetică pentru a se regăsi pe sine şi liniştea fără care nimeni nu se poate realiza desăvârşit".

The portrait dedicated to Duiliu Zamfirescu is born of a „brutal incongruence" between the appreciation of the artist and the reserves favored by the focus on the "biographical ego". The portrait starts, paradoxically, with a series of considerations on the artistic expression of Duiliu Zamfirescu's prose: „Nu voi exalta în Duiliu Zamfirescu nici poetul, nici creatorul de viaţă, dar, după atâtea decenii de evoluţie artistică, după apariţia atâtor temperamente mari artistice, ce au schimbat aproape cu totul faţa scrisului românesc – în anumitul sens al echilibrului clasic, stilul lui Duiliu Zamfirescu rămâne încă modelul cel mai realizat până acum al literaturii noastre. Un simţ al formei precise, fără digresiuni şi pitoresc voit, o eleganţă ieşită din simplicitate şi din discreţie, o reţinere evidentă, un amestec judicios al limbii curente a omului de cultură generală, fără excese de specializare, cu neologisme şi cu arhaisme venite la locul lor şi topite într-o masă solubilă, un ton de detaşare cuviincioasă faţă de obiect şi de respect de sine şi de cititor, o îmbinare de răceală aparentă şi de pasiune conţinută, o fluiditate ce nu se confundă cu uşurinţa şi frivolitatea, fac din acest stil o operă de artă valabilă prin armonia şi echilibrul ce respiră".

Duiliu Zamfirescu's portrait than develops by the evocation of the *man*, with certain disputable character features, with several vulnerable aspects of behavior, which disagree with Lovinescu's ethic code. At the beginning, a presentation of the exterior profile of the author of *Viata la tara / Life in the Country* is to be found: „Atletic, apolinic, de o frumuseţe bărbătească, trăit foarte mulţi ani în străinătate, din care vreo cincisprezece în Italia, în societatea internaţională cea mai aleasă, cu un viu simţ al artei şi al naturei, de o mare cultură clasică, culeasă la înseşi izvoarele ei, euritmic în toată făptura lui fizică, artist echilibrat, măsurat în expresie, precis şi elegant, fără a fi strict şi limitat, cu acea discreţie şi rezervă de ton atât de preţioasă – spărgând simbioza cu artistul, omul în toate manifestările lui se arată

lamentabil. Înfumurat, se lăuda, în polemicile cu d. Octavian Goga, că strămoşii săi erau mari învăţaţi la Bizanţ, într-o epocă în care strămoşii poetului nu se scoborâseră bine din maimuţă; teatral, protector fără să i-o fi cerut, lipsit de nuanţele pe care le înmuia atât de bine în artă, insuportabil chiar când era binevoitor, protocolar, clătinându-se între aroganţă şi politeţă vădit superioară, curtenitor cu femeile, serenissim cu oricine, în atitudine, în vorbă şi tăcere. Iată contrastul dureros, divorţul aproape, între artist şi om, ce m-a abătut repede de la priveliştea jalnică a acestei dezarmonii intime, iar, ca memorialist, mult mai târziu, m-a făcut să arunc vălul biblic peste amintirea lui".

At the end of the portrait, the diarist interprets objectively the correspondence between Duiliu Zamfirescu and Titu Maiorescu, where eminent qualities of the style (acute observation spirit, precision of expression, scenic representation, etc.) are found. Lovinescu underlines the artistic side of these letters, which, beyond their documentary aspect, have a rigorously fundamental expressive purpose: „Nu cred că depăşesc adevărul afirmând că de abia o dată cu publicarea acestei corespondenţe intră şi arta epistolară ca gen special în literatura noastră. Scrisorile lui Duiliu Zamfirescu nu au numai scopul firesc de a informa, ci sunt şi o operă de artă, lipsită însă de ostentaţia pe care o dă întotdeauna prezenţa publicului cititor. În ele găsim un om cult, în curent cu ce se publică în diverse literaturi, care trăieşte în străinătate în contact continuu cu oameni de cultură, cu o sensibilitate artistică în toate domeniile, literatură, muzică, arte plastice, care călătoreşte mereu, ştiind să vadă, şi care doreşte să exprime ceea ce a simţit şi văzut şi, mai presus de orice, o face cu o artă de romancier în vacanţă, fără încordare, dar cu aceeaşi armonie clasică a frazelor susţinute din când în când de neprevăzutul cuvântului, al imaginii şi de ferestrele deschise spre perspective fumurii. Artist complect, el nu-şi pune arta numai în cărţi, ci o trăieşte, o manifestă în orice act cotidian şi o exprimă în cele mai fugare rânduri trimise între două trenuri". The revelation of Duiliu Zamfirescu's mail correspondance is found by Lovinescu in the recovery of the balance between the man and the artist, in the clear expressivity and beauty of these pages: „Nu este o scrisoare, nu este un rând care să nu vădească nu numai frumuseţea stilistică, ci şi cea morală: siguranţa atitudinii îmbinată dintr-o deferenţă afectuoasă, fără umbra îmbulzelei sau slugărniciei, cu respectul demnităţii personale; o modestie faţă de toate încercările sale literare, ce se referă mereu la aprecierea criticului, fără să renunţe la afirmaţia individualităţii proprii; recurgerea repetată la protecţia omului politic, dar pe un ton strict, sobru, care caută totdeauna să pună chestiunea pe terenul dreptăţii şi nu pe al serviciului personal sau al favoarei; o naturaleţă de expresie, fără patetism, o omenie, ce ştie să-şi apere prietenii (Al. Vlahuţă, I.N. Roman) faţă de asprimea criticului; o mare fineţă şi perspicacitate în a judeca pe vrăjmaşi (de pildă, pe Caragiale), o afecţie luminoasă şi caldă faţă de ai săi, de cămin, de socru-său, de nevastă-sa, de copii – într-un cuvânt desfăşurarea, fără note false, a unei armonii sufleteşti, a unei delicateţi, în nuanţa ei cea mai anevoioasă, a respectului afectuos, fără abdicaţie de sine – ne restabilesc imaginea echilibrului moral, dispărut în clipa când l-am cunoscut eu".

Whether it is built of acceptance and praise or of reserve and negation, the stzle of E. Lovinescu's portraits derives from concision and expressive refinement. It is, therefore, a classic style. The diarist is preoccupied not by the exactitude of his observation, but by the expressivity of the phrase, by the sober authenticity of the notations, marked by distinction and fascination for the revelatory detail.

A lot of assertions about the destiny of the art and artist are to be found in Lovinescu's *Memories*. In these observations, the autobiographical discourse turns towards itself, receives a powerful auto-reflexive feature, interrogating itself about the chances art has to survive the erosion of time and history. An ethics of the creative act is obvious here, by the praise of art and the elimination of the contingent, by a sort of spiritual ascetism, that also contains a wave of skepticism necessary for an authentic situation in the time and space of the artistic phenomenon („Trebuie să fim conştienţi de faptul că suntem o forţă uriaşă pentru că din materialul fragil al cuvintelor putem clădi construcţii arhitectonice, ce vor încremeni mii de ani în amintirea oamenilor şi nu se vor împrăştia decât o dată cu specia, nu lucrăm numai dintr-o satisfacţie imediată şi dintr-un spirit de dominaţie temporară, ci pornim la cucerirea cerului şi a veşniciei cu frânghia de mătase împletită a versului sau a gândului subtil şi sonor; voim să ne prelungim fiinţa pieritoare prin eternitatea artei"). Obviously, Lovinescu's autobiographical discourse is not permanently equal, reducible to the significations of an apollinic spirit. We find here the state of emergency of a polemic spirit, with a remarkable ability of reaction, a spirit that is always on alert and which repudiates any kind of imperfection, discordance or disharmonies. Offensive and polemic, but also having the colors of skepticism and ironic relativity, the autobiographical discourse sometimes experiences an elegiac tendency, a diffuse and livresque lyrism.

In conclusion, we may say that E. Lovinescu's pages have a privileged place in Romanian diaristic literature, by the expressive resources they are based on, by the plasticity of the evoking portrait and by the appropriate tone, by the optimal dosage of social and psychological perception.

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The Revelation of Life or the Arch-Comprehension of the Embodied Unseen

„What must be the body in order to be a revelation in and through itself ? What must be the revelation in order to realize itself as a body?" – these are the essential questions to which Michel Henry gives a complexe answer in Incarnation. Une philosophie de la chair. We shall try to accompany the philosopher's answer, interpreting the meanings which may be seen on the two slopes of the problem. Firstly, we shall open the phenomenological horizon of the body understood as transcendental birth in the absolute Life or as the phenomenological matter of life which reveals itself as an immanent corporal pulsation, beyond the corporality of the mundane sensible. Secondly, we shall investigate, in the sense of the Christian salvation, the way in which, in order to realize itself as a body, the revelation must be an original appearance without any intentionality, as the Incarnation of the invisible in the living present of the visible.

„What must be the body in order to be a revelation in and through itself ? What must be the revelation in order to realize itself as a body?" – these are the essential questions to which Michel Henry gives a complexe answer in *Incarnation. Une philosophie de la chair*. We shall try to accompany the philosopher's answer, interpreting the meanings which may be seen on the two slopes of the problem. First of all, we shall open the phenomenological horizon of the body understood as transcendental birth in the absolute Life or as the phenomenological matter of life which reveals itself as an immanent corporal pulsation, beyond the corporality of the mundane sensible. Secondly, we shall investigate, in the sense of the Christian salvation, the way in which, in order to realize itself as a body, the revelation must be an original appearance without any intentionality, as the Incarnation of the invisible in the living present of the visible. We shall not step on the ways of this gradual illumination by using an understanding or a thinking; if the phenomenology of the body and that of the Embodiment illuminate a para-doxical apparition, than only an arch-understanding will be able to reveal the super-signification contained in the confession of the Word that become body (John 1, 14). As „orice duh care mărturiseşte că Iisus Hristos a venit în trup este de la Dumnezeu" (*1 Ioan* 4, 2).

What should the body be in order to be a revelation in and by itself ?

Distinguishing between the content of a phenomenon and the way it appears, or between what appears and the act of appearance (*phaiesthai*), the phenomenology reveals the subtle relation between the truth and the true thing. In order for the last to be really truth, it must show itself as the most originary phenomenon of truth, as Heidegger sais, the fact of appearing not being limited to making a true content appear in the thing (or the content of truth itself); it designates the pure apparition of an original truth which presents itself as self-revealing, impossible envelop in anything else but what reveals it. Before any apparition – posting itself as necessary condition of it – the fact of appearing also appears in and by itself. Nothing would appear by its own nature, which is of the blind matter, if the fact of appearing would not appear initially itself as a power that is different from the things it makes appear.

That is why, according to M. Henry: "faptul de a apărea care străluceşte în orice fenomen e faptul faptului de a apărea şi al lui singur", as a pure originary fact, a donator of any fact of appearance. In this context, how may we know if the revelation of the body is different or identical to the body itself; if in the body what embodies appears as itself in what is embodied and reveals as the very fact of seeming original of the body?

Considering the principle "as much being as apparition" it may be seen, in a first meaning, that the relation that links the appearing content to its apparition starts from the being: in order to appear, things need to be first. To be is, in this case, a pre-established conditionof the world, so that things are in the world and may appear in the world only due to this principle. Read in the opposite direction, the principle says that a thing that appears is and is not according to the way it appears. Now the fact of appearing is the very fact of being. But, as M. Henry notices: „faptul de a apărea şi faptul de a fi nu stau deloc pe acelaşi plan", as the second is determined by the first without which there would be nothing. The apparition does not establish the being, although a similar power operates in both of them, but this power is that of the fact of appearing. So that the essence of the fact – of – being comes from the esssence of – the fact – of appearing (and only due to the apparition of this in the fact of being), from this pre-existence of this self-apparition un-determined by any existence but determining everything that exists. Even if here phenomenology is not put in front of ontology, we are still dealing with two formal concepts, that of apparition and that of being, as the determination of the fact – of – being by the fact – of – appearing remains un-determined in itself, non-interrogated from the *interior* of the apparition itself, in and by what the one coming into being by giving existence.

According to another phenomenologic principle – "to the things themselves" – the "reduced" apparitional essence of the things is not given by the content of the phenomenon in which they show themselves in the world, but by the pure phenomenality of this content, by its fact of appearing. Or, the fact of appearing is so connected to the perception of what is shown that any act of knowledge of the things-phenomena is related to their visibility, or more exactly to the way in which, in order to be known, they present themselves to the sight. Knowledge only knows by bringing its object in the horizon of the visible, the known thing being a seen thing. It is a method by which the thing is gradually brought into light, until the complete clarity of evidence. "To the things themselves" represents here the principle of any intellective intuition which indicates to the pre-existence of a power of knowledge, to the apriorical condition of a possible experience. But there also is an intelligible that subtracts from a methodic knowledge, thus escaping any attempt of bringing it into light and sight. If such an intelligible exists, meaning that its fact of appearing determines its fact of being itself, it may only appear and be in an understanding situated at the beginning, in a pre-understanding that is the very way opened by its own apparition and being, or a sort of arch-understanding, "still not understood", into which everything is because it does not stop appearing in front of any light from the outside.

But if we accept, for now, that any apparition manifests itself only as an apparition of the world, that any apparition in the world brings into existence an intelligible object and that, therefore, any apparition into the outside is an arrival in the visibility of the world, than the relation between the apparition and the being, as well as the way leading to the things themselves represent ruining reductions of the apparition to the fact of appearing to the world.

„A revela într-o atare venire în afară, într-o punere la distanţă înseamnă a face să se vadă. Posibilitatea vederii stă în această punere la distanţă a ceea ce este pus în faţa vederii şi astfel e văzut de ea". An ekstatic revealation which does not only assume the coming of something in the outside, as what appears cannot be revealed as it is but in a sight that sees what is given beyond it; what is seen as a "transcendent" of any sight, in the phenomenologic meaning of the world, is not part of the consciousness, but is determined by its functionality, offers itself in the horizon opened by the exteriority of the object. The established distance is that between the act of seeing and the act by which something is visible, the distance defining the very object that is exposed and made visible. The object reveals itself as being what appears in the intentionality that makes it visible: „Această punere la distanţă în care se iveşte vizibilitatea a tot ceea ce este susceptibil să devină vizibil pentru noi dă măsura faptului de a apărea propriu obiectului. Astfel că a face să se vadă leagă în mod intim faptul-de-a-apărea de faptul-de-a-fi: ceea ce apare este întrucât e văzut ca fiind ceea ce apare. Prealabilul fiinţei este apariţia care dă de văzut, prin urmare lucrarea vederii este criteriul ultim ce trebuie desfăşurat, aşa cum declară Eugen Fink: „vederea nu se legitimează decât în lucrarea ei (…). Nu se poate trece dincolo de vedere" (*Le problème de la phénoménologie*, în *De la phénoménologie*, Ed. de Minuit, Paris, 1974, pp.212, 225). The access to the being is implied in the intentionality of a consciousness that sees what appears as the object of a transcendent existence.

But how may we see this sight reported to the object it sees on its outside? Or, in other words: "How does the intentionality that reveals any fact reveal to itself?" Either another intentionality is needed to make the intentional act of appearance visible by infinite regression, or there is another way of revelation besides the fact of making visible by intentionality. In the second case, revelation would no longer come from the outside, in the light of the world, and knowledge would be only a sight putting into performance the concept of phenomenality. But wouldn't we end-up, on both ways, in a reduction that is ineluctable? As, on one hand, knowledge would regress with each apparition that would need another operation to see the sight in which something appears; on the other hand, sight cannot see itself, and it would need another sight to see the distance between the first sight and what is seen by it. But both processes return to the same inability – belonging to any theoretical experience – closing knowledge in the limited light of the intelligibility, in the relation between seeing and what is to be seen. In other words, "what is seen may still be seen if sight itself collapses into darkness and nothing remains?"

What is seen is a phenomenon, or – according to Heidegger – "what shows itself in itself, what is manifest" and presents itself in full daylight or may be brought to light (*Fiinţă şi timp*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2003, p.38). The phenomenon that shows itself is the visible in itself, coming into the light as in a horizon of visibility. A horizon that also belongs to the world, in which something not only comes into light and becomes visible, but shows the horizon where the world comes and appears in its own light. What is shown now, beyond the illuminated appearance of any other phenomenon coming from the world, is the very fact of apparition of the world. A fact which, according to M. Henry, has three decisive features. First of all, everything that appears in the world "shows itself in the outside: as exterior, as another, different, thing", bringing into play the exteriority of the ek-static structure, the primordial otherness and the difference as the setting into distance. Features which give the

fact of appearing of the world a double perspective: on one hand, the horizon opened in the distance of the difference, which is the horizon of the world; on the other, what appears as a phenomenon different from the horizon of the world, but which, by appearing in the world, appears in the far horizon of it. It is a difference between what appears and the horizone where it appears, between what appears and the fact of appearing. The phenomena which can only show themselves in the horizon of the world and in the fact of appearing of the world are phenomena of the world; their horizon of apparition is the very phenomenality of the world. Which means that any such phenomenon – put in the exteriority, otherness and difference of manifestation – becomes distant of its own essence, "driven away from its true place"; become the prey of the existence in the world, it can only be a being of this world. Nevertheless, "the fact of appearing that reveals itself in the difference of the world does not only make different everything that is revealed like this, but it is itself a totally indifferent principle". An indifference of the shining itself, as everything that comes into the light and illuminates exists in the most neutral way. Even more, "the fact of appearing of the world is not only indifferent to everything that is revealed, but also incapable of giving it existence". The revelation in the difference of the world puts between the essence of the so-appeared phenomenon and its way of appearing an ontologic distance; by the apparition in the horizon of the world, the phenomenon doesn't exist or only exists in the world's way of being. The fat of appearing is indifferent to everything that appears, so that the existence – what is -, although intimately linked to the apparition it determines, does not posses the power it reveals. It resumes to the fact that it is, without being able to say what it is; what is defining for it is the fact that it appears and does not appear as what it appears; "the revelation reveals, discovers, closes, but does not create". By the three features (difference, indifference, inability of giving existence), and by another like otherness, exteriority, putting into distance, the primordial aspect of the fact of appearing in relation with the fact of being (and of phenomenology over ontology) is broken. Because the very fact of appearing of the world cannot be put into being: "although it appears effectively in it, what is in the world still does not exist. Even more: it does not exist because it appears in the world". The world leads to an irreconcilable divorce, to a reciprocal exclusion of the being and of the apparition, because in the world the fact of appearing discovers the existence, but does not create it. So that the inability of the apparition of the sensible world of reporting what appears in it shows the ontological incapacity of this apparition and the paradox of mundane re-realization.

At this moment of the discussion, the problem is split, the interest moving first on the possibility that something appears before the world and outside of it, and than on the way in which this apparition appears. Regarding the first subject, it considers the problem of the originary which comes in itself before any intentionality and independently of it. Before the originary, that before of the basis is an absolute beginning, before the world and therefore outside of it. The originary is beyond any concept and any conceived world. We are not referring to the beginning of a process that leads to the world, but to a permanent condition by which the essence is always possible and available. But not also available to present itself as a condition of possibility of a world, as the original essence will never come in the world, because the existence it makes possible is not a reality that answers about itself, unsubstantial because it is broken from the original aspect of its apparition. Therefore lacking a fundament, meant to disappear at the very moment of its apparition. In the fact of appearing of the world,

only the inverted principle according to which there is as much apparition as disappearance works.

In what concerns the way in which the apparition appears truly, we may only start from the original self-apparition as radical affectivity: this apparition which makes me be and offers itself to me as original essence without which I am nothing. When Descartes establishes as the first principle of philosophy the truth according to which "I thing, so I exist", he puts among the parentheses of doubt the world in which something is given to exist:: „din însuşi faptul că mă gândeam să mă îndoiesc de adevărul celorlalte lucruri, decurgea în mod evident şi sigur că eram" (*Discours de la méthode*, IV). The apparition of the being does not depend here of the apparition of the world's horizon, but only on the fact of appearing as original of thinking. Free of any mundane determination, thinking is self-affection: „doar ea nu poate fi desprinsă de mine, *sunt, exist*, în mod cert – adaugă el în *Meditaţia a doua* – . Dar cât timp ? atât timp cât gândesc" (*Discours de la méthode* suivi des *Méditations*, Union Générale d'Éditions, 10-18, 1975, pp.62, 183). In the meaning of the primordial self-apparition which is mine, the cogito carries in itself an ego as an unmistakable mark of present ipseity in the fact of seeming original: „În aşa fel încât – says M. Henry – nu este cu putinţă nici o viaţă care să nu închidă în ea ipseitatea unui ego – nici o *cogitatio* care să nu trebuiască să se spună *cogito*". Reduced to its own self appearance, which is its own phenomenologic matter separated from the fact of appearing of the world, the human existence is not the soil of this world's ground, it is no longer something that apears in a matter which „steals" its original essence; it is the apparition itself, the fact of appearing considered in its originarity. As long as the fact of appearing of the world is disqualifying by being put to doubt, the fact of seeing is also deceiving; to see does not mean that something exists, as when I judge the fact seeing, I put it to doubt; but even in the thinking of this fact as a necessary disappearance, what is may appear: I am, I exist. So that "the fact of seeing is responsible of proving its incompetence and in it we must read its failure". It is as if the sight only sees what contradicts its very capacity of seeing, altering what makes it possible. No other sight may correct false sight, as any sight in which appears the fact of appearing of the world is populated by its own inability of appearing to itself in another way that in the horizon of an exteriority in the night where the world disappears.

The sight must therefore be "given to itself, so that it appears to itself somewhere else than in sight and differently than by it". It is exactly the sight that appears in the disappearance of the world, the sight that has nothing left to see and no longer makes anything visible. Disqualifying the entire visible universe, which is the one of mundane exteriority, sight no longer sees, but experiences the originary revelation, the self-revelation of absolute Life. The light of the world has faded, with its doubtable truth; what may still appear- in this disappearance – besides the light of a liberated truth, developed in the obscure field of the world, a truth "much higher in origin, called The Truth of Life"? Between the fact of appearing of the world and the fact of appearing of absolute Life there is an essential difference. If the first one is manifested in exteriority, in difference and neutral and impersonal indiffernce which only define this apparition as an ontologic disappearance and metaphysical ireality (as much inexistence as apparition), in the second the fact of seeing is revealed to itself as an imanent act, in-different and non-intentional of the original self-

affection (as much being as apparition). It is the very „passing of the fact of ek-static seeing into the imanent self-revelation of Life". Only now, the sight of intentionality no longer absorbs life; life seen intentional may appear and give life, as any singular existence of an original ego is based on an essence of the existence from which it is born and self-revelates in the singular existence by bringing it into being. The only relation left is established by the transcendent Life giving itself in the particular content of what is seen. What is revealed in the self-revelation of Life is Life itself given, illuminating and shining in all that is alive, as the light that makes visible.

And than, if „life is invisible, how would he gain access to it in thinking?" Access to life is no longer possible from outside of it, from the exteriority of the world; if the world offers itself as visibility or is instituted by the sight of the intentionality oas what is seen and known, life cannot be seen. Access to life is only possible from life itself, starting with ourselves. And exactly this arrival to ourselves precedes any arrival in the world. But we do not arrive to ourselves as if we would come to ourselves in the world where we appear as ourselves; in the world what appears is our mundane self, fallen from the originary life that generates us; we come to ourselves and are only in the eternal process where absolute Life comes to itself. Only in and by this process „vin cei vii la Viaţă. Întrucât suntem vii, suntem fiinţe ale nevăzutului. Nu suntem inteligibili decât în invizibil, plecând de la el". So it is not the visible body whcich is always formed of the phenomenologic matter of the world that defines us; it is not the body that appears in the world in order not to be, to vanish in the visibility that sight absorbs till disappearance. If absolute Life self-donates, it reveales itself in a pathetic body, affected to its most obscure zones of life who tries it: „un trup viu, un trup nevăzut, inteligibil în invizibilul vieţii şi numai plecând de la ea". The sight of thinking does not see this body it cannot make appear in the visibility of the world's horizon. It may only be understood by a rational knowledge who sees man as an object. Only an arch-understanding – an inteligibility of a different order – is able to understand before any sight, before the visibility horizon the visible of which may be conceived, before the world's fact of apparition. This is an arch-understanding that belongs to absolute Life, to the invisible that is understood by its self-revelation in the body. In its self-knowledge, Life comes before thinking and seeing; it comes into itself without thinking and therefore without being. Beyond Descartes declaration of the primordiality of the cogito in relation to the being (which remains between the boundaries of pure inteligibility), „nici o gândire nu ne îngăduie să fim vii", there is no condition of posibility to reveal Absolute Life. In order to come to itself, thinking does not need to see the apparition in the world of what it thinks; it comes to itself without sight, lacking intentionality, comes in its very self-revelation that makes it possible. In the fact of being, the fact of seeing is revealed to itself int he absence of the world and sight, in total mundance eclypse. Therefore, thinking does not illuminate us for any other reason than that it illuminated: „*cogitatio* e o auto-revelare": I am alive, so I think, so I exist. „Nu gândirea ne dă acces la viaţă, ci viaţa îngăduie gândirii să acceadă la sine", and this vital access is an original way of manifestation, the immanent self-revelation of life in its invisible pathos:. „Invizibilul precede orice vizibil ce poate fi conceput"; It permits life to see what is to be seen, to see itself as self-trial in the arch-understanding of this establishing unseen which, by giving something to sight, does not show itself but works in the sight of its own shining.

If the fact of ek-statically appearing of the world, in which the sight only sees the visible of the disappearance determines the phenomenological structure of the mundane body, as the object of an intentional representation that thinking can think as its own object, the fact of appearing of originary Life, imposing the primordial aspect of Life over thinking, is the self-revelation of the transcendental subjective body, impossible to objectify in any thinking. It is the original, non-intentional and non-sensible body, the essence of which is invisibile life. It is not the felt, seen, touch body, but the body that feels and makes felt, in which the invisible envelops itself in sight and touches in what is touching it: an embodied subject. What appears in and like a body is no longer the fact of appearing out of itself, specific to the apparition of the world and of the object-body, but is the same with the fact of the apparition itself.. „O corporalitate originară invizibilă aşadar, despuiată de orice caracter mundan", where life that revelates itself is the very revelation of the illuminating and unseen body that supports our visible body. „Lumea dezvăluie un corp pe care nu-l creează. Viaţa revelează carnea trupului născând-o drept ceea ce ia naştere în ea". In the body in which Life creates itself, it may come from itself, as „nu există Viaţă fără trup, dar nici trup fără Viaţă". Therefore, there is no Life without its absolute self-passion in body revelation. Transcendental and still transcendent life, in the metaphysic and theological meaning of the term, as immanent self-revelation of the essence that make the very apparition of a body possible designates the interior possibility of a Self that precedes any corporality and visibility but which, illuminating beyond the phenomenological matter of the world, is an to-be-another of an inexhaustible mystery that marks the difference between the fact of appearing of the world and the fact of appearing of Life. The otherness is not presented here as a random exteriority, like in the case of the appearing of the world, but as a *totally different* something that irrupts in the interior of life as Life that is given to it *ab origine.*. „Transcendenţa desemnează imanenţa Vieţii în fiecare viu", the proximal that is non-proximal and, within us, comprises us in its infinity. Here protestant theology and catholic theology basically speak the assert the same thing: „Dumnezeu este transcendent în sânul vieţii noastre", says Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as „transcendentul nu e departele nesfârşit, ci tocmai aproapele" (*Widerstand und Ergebung*, 1954, p.255); but, adds Karl Rahner, „Extrem de aproape care este totodată Cel mai îndepărtat" (*Tratat fundamental despre credinţă*, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2005, p.336). This apparition is not a mundane one, not a comming into the world, but a comming to the Self in a body, in the pure body of its own apparition.

2. What should revelation be to accomplish itself in a body ?

We have seen how in order to become revelation in and by itself, the body must be Life as self-revelation of its transcendetal and trancendent essence. What does this revelation that gives itself a body in order to let absolute Life shine in it, mean now? What does, therefore, the paradox according to which „The Word became Body (John, 1,14) mean, as well as the confession that „Jesus Christ came in a body (John 4,2; 2 John 1,7)" The relation between Word and body appears even more paradoxical as it defines the consistency of the same person, Christ, and, - therefore – is definitory to the relation between God and man. „Se poate face un Dumnezeu om sub forma Cuvântului care Se face trup – se întreabă M. Henry – şi aceasta în una şi aceeaşi persoană ? Cum să situăm o existenţă la încheietura a două

substanţe eterogene ?" Unity is accomplished where the Word turns into body and accomplishes the unity between these substances, and what appears as heterogeneous proves to be reciprocal assumption or co-participation to the same act of apparition. As the coming of God in man *is* the coming of the Word in body, the embodiment by which it reveals itself as already arrived. The body will not only have to be revelation in and by itself, but it will also have to accomplish the self-revelation of God. The body itself is revelation, but revelation is accomplished a s body; the body is the horizon of trans-visibility of the invisible Word. But this is not a sort of clothing the Word would wear in order to appear, a case in which the body would only be the objective body as the fact of the mundane apparition. In body, the Word would remain unseen, trespassing in a substance that cannot reveal it, but hides it in an insurmountable incognito. The word does not take a body as if it were wearing a coat; it does not *turn* into a body, but comes in the body of its self-revelation, becomes embodied. This self-creation – em-bodiment be-coming – is not related to the form of apparition, to the appearance of any of the representation, but to the reality of the apparition by which the Word makes itself a body and the body is already the Word. Or, the body of the Word cannot be the body made of clay, the visible in which the Word would exteriorize itself in the world; the body of the Word is from the Word itself, a body made of its own light. We witness here another way of revelation, different to the one by which the world becomes visible; what is revealed – even if revealed *in* the world – is an invisible reality of this world, because it is not *from* the world. The arch-understanding of this apparition brings into light a new definition of man: "the definition of an invisible man and at the same time an embodied man – invisible as body". Isn't this the face created to man according to "the face of the unseen God? (Col. 1,15), which implies a way of appearing totally different from that of the world? An than, the man should be redefined – according to the arch-understanding of its double nature – not according to the human condition that wears a body in order to come into the world, but according to its condition of body-like face revealed as similitude to the unseen Face of God, to that arch-face that presents itself as a body and illuminates inside sight.

The coming into a body meant to death, made from the clay of the soil, speaks nevertheless of the passing feature of this body and – again – of its human character. On one hand, the body shows itself as an exterior body, its matter being the content of the visible world. But this body-object born in the world is insensible as, unable to touch what touches it, it is, in a way, untouchable, does not suffer any touch that might affect it. The table does not touch the wall, and therefore does not suffer the touch of the hand or the knife that sticks in it, just like a dead body. Where life does not appear, where it does not turn itself into a body, we may only speak of bodies given to the world. There is nothing invisible in them, because they have no interior, being pure exteriority, visibility devouring itself. No living man has such a body, as any man comes into the world with his own life – and comes into life before coming into this world – with a real body that suffers and enjoys, feels hunger or thirst, is touched by what it touches: a sensibly affected body. Such a body reveals itself as suffering or joy, hunger or thirst, as interior flesh animated by the absolute reality it comes from: „un trup suferitor care deţine realitatea suferinţei lui prin fenomenalizarea sa patetică în viaţă". On the other hand, Christ came into a body that He didn't give life to, but came in the way of being of the body, as this body defined by its suffering. Not a dead and resurected body, but a body meant to die, suffering the pain of each step towards death; in other words, a human body that

needs to die. The assumption of the human condition is much more than awfully real, in the pains of the body which dies in the world, because if this body would not have been real, truly enduring, Christ wouldn't have suffered anything, and his death on the cross would have been a terrible disillusion. Christ suffers like a man, like any man in his earthly body: „nu înţelegem aceasta – spune Sf. Anselm – potrivit cu măreţia naturii care nu poate suferi, ci după neputinţa firii omeneşti pe care o purta" (*De ce s-a făcut Dumnezeu om*, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 1997, p.83).

What does this death mean and what is the purpose of absolute Life revealed in and as body? If giving your life means the acceptance of death, Jesus gives his spirit (John, 19,30) assuming till the end the human condition. But to accept death means to give yourself life without being yourself life; by offering his own life, Jesus offers something he does not have from himself and already belongs to God: „întrucât era om, afirmă Sf. Anselm, nu avea de la sine, ci de la Tatăl, voinţa de a trăi după dreptate" (*op.cit.*, p.95). Therefore, the desire to be Life, to be alive in the body of Life, does not come from the human nature, but from his divinity. Death is the chain that links the mystery of the Embodiment to that of the Resurection, in a reciprocal revelation. If the Embodiment is the assumption by the Word of the human condition (*assumere hominem*), only possible if the human nature is assumed without sin ("the embodiment must be accomplished without the assumption of sin", ibid. p.241), Jesus gives his life "as an offering for sin" and therefore "will extend his life" (Is. 53,10). The descent of the Word into body is accomplished by the self-revelation of Life which enriches human nature; by assuming it, it liberates it; by creating it, it restores it. The only real relation between the instauration and restoration of Life is accomplished by death. And death is the very self-offering of Life; it is not the offering of an exterior gift, but of one that comes from the very being of the offered one. And this ultimately assumes the understanding of the essence of human salvation and of the birth in Absolute Life, like Saint Anselm says it: „acest om trebuie să deţină ceva mai de preţ decât tot ceea ce este inferior lui Dumnezeu, ceva pe care să-l ofere lui Dumnezeu din propria voinţă şi nu din datorie (…). Însă acest ceva nu e de găsit nici în afara lui Dumnezeu, nici între cele subordonate lui (…). Prin urmare, în el însuşi trebuie găsit (…). Aşadar, va oferi fie ceva din sine, fie se va oferi pe sine însuşi" (*op.cit.*, p.219). The single priceless thing man may offer is the Life he does not have from hismself, this body of Life's self-revelation in which divine nature came from above and human nature is already assumed by Embodiment. Life is not outside of God, as it does not become an exterior fact of the apparition of the world, a mundane existence.

Everything that comes into the world is outside Life and under Life; as long as it stays in pure mundane visibility, the man can only offer his body, but he offers it as an object he no longer needs, that he gives away like in a suicide. He shouldn't offer what he has, but what he is, his most precious life he cannot lose, as „deşi creatura nu are nimic de la sine (…), de la sine oferă ceea ce-i aparţine" (*ibid.*, p.267). How may be understand the gift by which we offer something we do not have to somebody who already has it?

If „the intelligence of this world is madness in front of God" (1 Cor. 3,13), it is because it attempts to obtain what it did not get, that is the nothingness of *to have* instead of the infinity of *to be*. „An what do you have, that has not been given to you?" (*Cor. 4,7*), what may we have besides what is given to us in order to give at our turn? We have the Word

which, for us, turned into a body, and the body, into light; still, in the very light of *our* body, we have nothing that hasn't been given to us, unless the belief that we *are* „Christ, and Christ, of God" (*1 Cor. 3,23*) besides the order preexistent to us – of "The one who works in everything, according to His will's advice" (*Efes. 1,11*) – towards our restoration in the real way of Life. The paradox is in the fact the Life reveals itself in a body given to death, „căci trebuie ca acest trup stricăcios să se îmbrace în nestricăciune şi acest (trup) muritor să se îmbrace în nemurire. Iar când acest (trup) stricăcios se va îmbrăca în nestricăciune şi acest (trup) muritor se va îmbrăca în nemurire, atunci va fi cuvântul care este scris: « Moartea a fost înghiţită de biruinţă»" (*1 Cor*. 15, 53-54).

We must see here that the imperative of converstion to life comprises the body, the earthly (made of clay) face of man, the flesh and blood that cannot inherit by themselves the kingdom of God. The mystery of the Resurrection refers to the wearing of the celestial face, the one who in-spirits the *entire* human being. As "not all of us shall die, but all of us shall change" (*1 Cor. 15,51*), in other words only those into belief will conquer death, swallowed by the triumph of the new life, but the change awaits all of us in the same measure, the dead and the living, and the dead among the dead who "vor invia nestricatiosi, iar noi ne vom schimba" (15,52). As "all of us shall change" means that *only* all of us together have the power of *total* change. "Not all of us shall die" because only what stays in the past of non-will or in the present of bad-will dies, in the continuous strength of self-adulation. What does not die, as a totality of accomplished life, is the expectance of resurrection from death, a hope that opens itself to the belief in the forgiving nature shown in the person of Christ. Thus, death is already passed-through by the love that gives us back to Life, giving life to the very body of death. Passing "from death to life" (*1 John 3,14; John 5,24*), the believer has the awareness of the presence of life; life is already present, as "suddenly, in the blink of an eye" (*1 Cor. 15,52*), everything stays under "an order given towards life" (*Rom. 7,10*). By bringing Life, Jesus brings revelation; in and by Him, Life reveals itself, as He is himself the "Way, Truth and Life" (*John, 14,6*).

We now understand that when Saint Anselm says: what desires must exist (*op.cit, p. 269*), he means the life of the One who, by offering it, "extends it", meaning he saves it in eternity, the will working in the core of the donation according to the freedom of the act of restoring the existence. We have seen the will ("rightful desire") he has is not of a human nature, but comes from his divinity. "The Son offered himself by own will to his Father", but "offered Himself according to human nature"; the property of will is that of being pre-given to human nature by divine nature; in the self-offering of Life, the human nature's will is no different to the one of the divine nature, but what it desires to offer is not what it has from itself, but what is already offered to it, or, more precisely , what is already given in order to be offered. The property of human nature is to be close to divine nature, as "when he became man, in human nature he received from divine nature (…) the faculty of owning as personal what he had". Thus the offering *according to human nature* is possible because in it the offering *according to divine nature* is active, the establishment of one implying in its own act the restoration of the other. „Pentru aceasta Mă iubeşte Tatăl, fiindcă Eu îmi pun sufletul, ca iarăşi să-l iau. Nimeni nu-l ia de la Mine, ci Eu de la Mine Însumi îl pun. Putere am Eu ca să-l pun şi putere am iarăşi să-l iau" (*Ioan* 10, 17-18). Death and the Resurrection are not possible without the event of the Embodiment; Christ reveals itself as absolute Life by becoming a

body, assuming the human nature in self-offering, raising it to the force of divine nature. He gives his Life – puts his soul in the death of this world – taking it back, as a pure body; gives it to himself in order to take it from himself; puts it revealing himself as a force that conquers death, taking over him what belongs to him, the offered and renewed Life. But by giving it to himself, he gives it to the Father who gave him the power to give, just as the man offers what there is, putting his life in the hands of the One who gave it to him and who permanently gives it by calling it to Himself.

A double mistery, in which, as K. Rahner says: „Dumnezeu asumă o natură umană ca pe propria sa natură", the nature of man embracing completness and giving away itself so that it would become God; „este orientarea nesfârşită către misterul infinit al plinătăţii", care ajunge, atunci când e asumată de Dumnezeu ca realitatea Lui proprie, să tindă mereu „în virtutea esenţei sale" (*op.cit.*, p.321). In its orientation towards the divine infinity, human nature is comprised by this omnipresent infinity – always active – which ssubtracts itself to any exterior illumination. The transcendental apparition of Life – established "before the ages, to our grace" (*1 Cor. 2,7*) is *conversion*, orientation towards God, in the meaning in which it is the Rise of what appears oriented by and towards transcendence. In other words, what establishes and makes possible inside of us the truth of Life is beyond us; we tend towards the cause that made us be as towards our final goal; a similar horizon puts us on our way and calls us into the light that attracts us. The fact that, by embodiment, God becomes something related to the force of the infinity of making itself finite, of coming into finality, as this is the only way the mystery may be understood, the mystery by which: „Acela care este în sine imuabil poate fi, într-un altul, mutabil" (*ibid.*, p.325). Self-donation is offering and ordering at the same time, self-expropriation (*kenosis*) and eternal self-generation (*genesis*); according to Saint Augustin, God *assumit creando* and *assumendo* creat, creation being the self-expropriation and the appropriation of human reality created; „creează realitatea umană *în timp ce* o asumă ca fiindu-i proprie" (*ibid.*, pp.325-326). A process in which God exits itself as an infinite, that offers itself and receives into intself the gift given to the gifted one which he assumes as his own. That is why, „autoexprimarea imanentă a lui Dumnezeu în plinătatea veşnică este condiţia autoexprimării sale în afara Lui, iar aceasta din urmă o revelează tocmai pe cea dintâi" (*ibid.*, p.328). By uttering Himself in Himself, in the Word that becomes a body, God establishes human nature according to this original ontologic *primus.* The self-expression of God in man reveals itself as the self-expropriation of the divinity and the assumption of human nature as own ex-pression (Aus-sage) of His immanent Word. „Posibilitatea de a exista a oamenilor este întemeiată pe posibilitatea mai mare, mai cuprinzătoare şi mai radicală a lui Dumnezeu de a se exprima pe sine în Logos-ul care devine creatură" (*ibid.*, p.329). The possiblity of human life, of humans to be alive, is established on the possiblity of absolute divine Life of revealing itself into the ex-posed Word in a body. A Word that cannot be taken back, as, once give, in its own self-offering, it re-tracts the entire being, orders it and ex-tracts it from what it is not in order to restore it to Life.

Therefore, the one who dies is the object-body of which God makes a body by breathing life into it, a body that is the phenomenological performance of it. „Trupul, Says St. Irineu de Lyon, e în stare să primească şi să conţină puterea lui Dumnezeu"; „Că trupul e în stare să primească Viaţa se dovedeşte prin însăşi Viaţa pe care (trupul) o trăieşte deja"

(*Contre les hérésies*, Le Cerf, Paris, 1991, pp. 577, 578). The body receives life, giving itself to the Life that makes it alive; it gives life to this Life he had received and in the immanence of which it lives, as in an original side that self-reveals by it an in it. If any body comes from the Word – „All were made through Him and without Him nothing was made of what was made. Into Him was life and life was the light of men" (*John 1,3-4*) – it means that there is a co-naturality relation between the divine essence and the human essence, between the original Creation of Man and he embodiment of the Word.. „Dacă Cuvântul Vieţii – says M. Henry – a născut trupul dându-i Viaţa în afara căreia nu e cu putinţă nici un trup, în care rămâne orice trup, e deoarece Cuvântul nu e absent niciodată din creaţia sa". The two natures of Jesus Christ are co-essential, as the divine one gave birth to the human one. And the restoration of human nature, after the performance of sin and the receival of the sinner one, cannot be accomplished without the same creative divine nature intervention; only the fact of appearing of the divine nature gives Life to the fact of being of the human nature. The body forgets nothing, as it is itself the „cyfer" or the inapparent image of divinity that establishes us, the source of an ageless truth, the power of which is permanently offered to us; human nature is born each time the fact of appearing of Life appears that appears in itself restores the original revelation, like „amintirea unui act – according to Maine de Biran – poartă în sine sentimentul puterii de a-l repeta" (*Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie et sur ses rapports avec l'étude de la nature*, Alcan, Paris, 1932, t. VIII, p.605 n.).

„Această restaurare nu e cu putinţă decât dacă Însuşi Cuvântul S-a întrupat în acest trup devenit păcătos şi muritor, în aşa fel încât din distrugerea lui să se ivească Cuvântul Însuşi şi o dată cu El naşterea noastră în El ca îmbrăţişare a Vieţii absolute". It is the act of super-abundent love by which we become sons of the One who accepts us as sons; but we may only do this because we have received through the Son the communion with the Father. The Word, born and embodied, is the mediator between man and God, so that – says St. Bonaventura – "eternal si nevazutul sa se face vizibile sis a se intrupeze ca sa ne readuca la Tatal" An active mediator in the Embodiment of which the double mystery of the Creation and Resurrection or – in neoplatonic terms – of the procession (*proodos*) and conversion (*anodos*) is reflected: „Este necesar – adds the franciscan Saint – să plasăm un mediator în procesiunea şi în reîntoarcerea lucrurilor ; în procesiune mediul trebuie să ţină mai mult partea celui care creează, iar în reîntoarcerea lucrurilor, el trebuie să ţină mai degrabă partea celui care se întoarce, căci aşa cum toate au venit de la Dumnezeu prin Cuvântul lui, tot astfel trebuie ca pentru împlinirea reîntoarcerii, mediatorul între « Dumnezeu şi oameni » să nu fie doar Dumnezeu, ci şi om, ca să îi reîntoarcă pe oameni la Dumnezeu" (*ibid.*, paragr.23, pp.99-100). A similar arch-understanding passes through the Word and the man in order to unite them into Christ; „această Arhi-înţelegere, says M. Henry, e auto-revelarea Vieţii absolute" or of the „Arhi-trupului presupus în orice trup". And this illuminates a double phenomenological relation of reciprocal interiority: that between absolute Life and Word, on one hand, and that between all the living and Christ, on the other: „Şi slava pe care Tu Mi-ai dat-o, le-am dat-o lor ca să fie una, precum Noi una suntem. Eu întru ei şi Tu întru Mine, ca ei să fie desăvârşiţi întru unime" (*Ioan* 17, 22-23). This is the way in which the Embodiment of Life accomplishes the enduring connection between God and man, the body being the fact of apparition of Life, its self-revelation in a living body.

The fact that revelation gives itself a body and that it has to be the self-revelaiton of the absolute Life in order to accomplish itself as a body does not substract the body from the horizon of visibility, but illuminates it establishing it in the original pre-vention of Life in intself, in the arch-understanding of its invisible essentece. Human nature is assumed by the divine nature by super-naturalizing it, extending it into the Life that gives it the true basis.. „Ceea ce vine înainte de orice trup e propria sa venire în sine, e întruparea lui", ceea ce „este mai înainte decât toate şi toate prin El sunt aşezate" (*Col.* 1, 17) – The Word that gives Life in its original dimension. It is the very transcendental possiblity of the fact of being together, in the einvisible essence of the two natures (which, together, form a single body) as well as in the relation with the others, in the invisible body of a community. The man is no longer understood in his condition of an individual who appears in the world, in his empiric and contingent individuation, but in his original aspect – of a spiritualized Son – that is ireducible as it is generated by the revelation of identity in the self-donation of absolute Life. The man is en-godded, being created according to the divine appearance, born in the very birth of the body of Life that saves finite life as long as it, by staying in God, remains alive. Similarly, any restoration of human nature is only possible in the Life which, embodying itself into the Word, edifies us from the interior, offering Itself in its origianl arch-knowledge. „Acolo unde orice viu vine la viaţă, unde Viaţa îl dă lui însuşi în Arhi-înţelegerea auto-donării ei absolute – în naşterea noastră transcendentală, acolo unde suntem Fii", our body is already a body, since always. A body generated by the Spirit that shows the man according to God's Face: „Trupul vostru este templu al Duhului Sfânt care este în voi, pe care-L aveţi de la Dumnezeu" (*1 Cor.* 6, 19).

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Stanescu's Essays on the Poetic Consciousness

The isotopies of the poetic meaning are markers of discourse in Stanescu's meta-text. On the level of conceptual configuration, the metaphor „an interiour herbivorous of the grass" becomes the main isotopy of Stanescu's essays, as well as of the poetic work. The isotopy of the poetic consciousness proves to be a faustical project, analysed through the perspective of the topofily as an expression of the poetic ego's existence by the polyphonic configuration of the poetic consciousness. Stanescu's essays are a different register of the same work, discoursive constructs, parts of the poetic work. Stanescu's discourse in the essays is a poetic palimpsest: here, the primary matter of poetry, structural propositions and the poetic communication await the poem.

The textual metaphoric meaning of Stanescu's discourse in the essays offers a discoursive knowledge of reality (continuous knowledge): the prospective perspective (telescopic, the exterior transcendence) – the sensible, continues with the introspective one (autoscopic, the interior transcendence) – the inteligible. The poetic consciousness (perceptive:: *„Tristeţea mea aude nenăscuţii câini / pe nenăscuţii oameni cum îi latră"*) dislocates the textual meaning in the linguistic sequence towards an imaginary horizon: *inter* mundi. The meaning of contemplation of the reality is produced "from the outside to the inside". Here, the space is compressed. The reflection is oriented towards a hyper-dense universe:

„*Îmi închipui, uneori, că obiectele întruchipează vidul. Se cade în obiecte. Numai vidul poate avea formă. Ceea ce există numai murind poate avea înfăţişare*."

[Stănescu, 1990: 316].

The esthetic man leaves the abstract space, towards a resting point in / with himself. It is a space which will be defined by "the orange tunnel" of the perceptive consciousness. The auctorial instance transformed into the hero of the essay lives in an imaginary space, in a continuous present, surprised by the paradox:

„Tristeţea mea aude nenăscuţii câini
***pe nenăscuţii oameni cum îi latră**."* [*Căutarea tonului*[1], 1990: 205-206]

This is the space where the poetic consciousness reconsiders the „tone" of the fourth degree worlds:

„Lumea de gradul al patrulea se află [...] *la frontiera dintre atmosferă şi non-atmosferă. Ea-şi „salvează" atmosfera* [...] *prin treceri dialectice de la un grad de lume (de atmosferă)la altul, prin transformări caleidoscopice ale atmosferei în funcţie de perspectiva adoptată*." [Neţ, 1989: 119]

The fourth degree world is representative for Stanescu's metapoetic discourse. [2] Let us read a relevant quote from the essays for the poetic notion of „fourth degree world":

[1] A poem that was meaningfully inserted in Fiziologia Poeziei: the lyrics transmit the restlessness of the poetic consciousness in the search of the true „tone" of the existence, of destiny.

„Sunt unele temperamente artistice, care-şi găsesc tonul expresiei dintr-odată, fără fluctuaţiile căutării[...] Aceste temperamente sunt poate cele mai apte să se realizeze în poezia de atmosferă[..] Ei sunt poeţii fără vârstă[...] Aceasta este categoria de poezii care propune interferenţa cea mai pregnantă a poeziei cu muzica[...] e vorba de conexiunile metaforelor schimbându-şi locul la infinit pe un portativ fix."

[1990, FP/ *Pagini de jurnal:* 385-386]

Before interpreting the „information" of the last space in the topophily of the writer's ego in the essays, we underline the fact that the representations of self-awareness dedoubling [1990, FP/ *Despre corpul alergic al ideilor*: 85-87] of the man, an ubicuous presence in the cosmos, respect the ontic meaning proposed by the essay-writer.

The allegory of the poetic-essaystic existential development no longer respects the linear, classic construction, the referential network of the text being solider to the auctorial intention: abandon of familiar spaces [fourth degree discourse]. The poetic principle is established by "the Icaric idea", the writer preferring to settle into a labyrinth from the perspective of the Dedalus – artist. It is a real texture in which the "existing"[3]/creation / is de deposit („host") of the „existing" / createdd/, objects (the works).

„Poetul este cel mai predestinat să nască existenţe concrete."

[1990, FP/ *Ciudatul râs al raţiunii estetice*: 302]

The text is consumed on the level of language acts, an esthetic experience by which the imaginary worlds are projected. We find an "imagining" consciousness that cannot be "de-embraced" from the perceptive consciousness (from *Scrisori de dragoste* or *Răzgândiri*), as a last expression of the consciousness: „the self itself" the „idea of the self"!

The essay cycle *„Scrisori de dragoste"* proposes a „transgression of poeticity" [St. Mincu] as an intertextual and inter-reading method and the passing to the meta-world: R-Text → Meta-Text→ „Something Else". By trans-poetization a literal meaning of truth is sought for, a literality that ignores metaphor in the favor of metonimy: it is the transcendance of the poetic towards the onthos, by the literal expresson of the auctorial state. The invasion of the poetic sensible and inteligible imaginary into the real is mediated by the world:

„Tansgresarea cuvântului prin chiar rostirea lui, depăşirea poeticităţii în interiorul ei pentru a ajunge la poezie porneşte de la concepţia interiorităţii oricărui fapt uman.[...] *Aşa cum Eminescu îşi crea o cosmologie (în Scrisoare I şi în alte poeme), o concepţie filozofică asupra lumii şi a istoriei, la fel Nichita Stănescu va imagina o cosmologie a vorbirii, o „fizică" şi o „fiziologie" a ei, situându-se* ***în punctul cel mai evoluat al cunoaşterii poetice***,[s.a.] *dialogând cu descoperirile uluitoare ale ştiinţelor prezentului."* [Şt. Mincu, 1991: 15]

[2] By essay-genre we relate to the literary species: essay, journal, memoirs, scriptural forms which offer freedom to the creative spirit, regardless of its field of manifestation. It is worthy to reflect on the fact that the essay genre remains anchored in all the fields of culture.

[3] The gerund here presents the isotopy /continuity, significant for the onthos. Existing = the fact of being; existent = „iluzia reprezentării unei unice fiinţări sparte în cioburi." [1990, FP/ *Scrisorile de dragoste...:* 328]

To the critic observation of St. Mincu [1991], also relevant for the essay, as an accomplishment of the artistic act in the artist's interiority (the state of an „interior herbiviorous of the grass"), we add Stanescu's voice:

„ [...] fermecaţi de logos, râdem. E un fel[...] de ***râsu' plânsu'****, e un fel de secret de a te despărţi apropiindu-te[...], de a-i acorda acele* ***lacrimae rerum*** *existenţei, concretului, logosului...*"[s.a.] [1990, FP/ *Ciudatul râs al raţiunii estetice*: 304]

It is natural for the perceptive consciousness to add a universe from the future: the Logos, after going through the three familiar spaces in a „*joie de vivre*" of reduplicating the essential facts, a meaning that also covers the livresque:

„A cunoaşte înseamnă a te despărţi. Forma materială nu e altceva decât un şir lung de despărţiri. Din punct de vedere estetic, logosul nu e altceva decât locul unde materia se desparte definitiv de vid!"

[1990, FP/ *Ciudatul râs al raţiunii estetice*: 303]

The apparent paradox in the assertion *„To know means to separate"* verifies truths on the level of the assertions in which we operate the substitutio of the two verbal lexemes, conclusioned by: *„The material form is nothing else than a long line of knowing"*, as Noica would say: *separation is knowledge!*

Inferenceswill also function as paradoxes of truth, like: *the further you go, the closer you come* or, *knowledge is an act of losing, understood as a breaking in the need for the close one!*

By its nature of objectualized language[4], the Logos expulses matter, objects! Now the truth is revealed to us: poetry makes itself as an object: *„Poezia e [..] arta poeziei."* Now the substantialization of the language and the poetization of the real! The breaking of the sign takes place (of the poetic sign!) into „understoood and well-understood", language and meta-language, metareality of the word in which the poet lives: the perceptive consciousness on the level of which „I am you". The narrative instance is, alongside the reader, implied, and both of them are characters of the text – poetic discourse:

„Tu, atât apuc să strig, tu / şi cuvântul începe să se vadă
încet, încet, cum se vede lăsarea de noapte / cuvânt din două litere: tu
Animal monstruos, - înţelesul – / s-a oprit, şi începe să se vadă"
[1971, *Belgradul în cinci prieteni :Străfund de ochi*]

The pronoun „you" is nothing else than a reconstruction of the biblic word, the absolut knowledge real in the possession of the ethical Man: *„Rupeţi deci cuvântul, este trupul meu."* [1971, *Belgradul...*: *Ritual*] And from the Logos, the spirit descends into the real, exchanging the identity: „Eu sunt numele meu": *„Fac schimb cu mine însumi, Doamne!"*[1971, Belgradul ....: *Pe cel mai des*] The perceptive „understood" is followed by the imaginative „well-understood", the poetic vision: „A*nimal monstruos, - înţelesul -/ s-a oprit, şi începe să se vadă ..."* „monstruosity" receives the polisemantic meaning: a „polipier truth", as it is called by the essay-writer. If the religious, political and esthetic man are phenomenalizations of the self-consciousness, the ethic man will be the sublime form for the self alone!

[4] The reference reading for „the language as an object": Ecaterina Mihăilă,

Our option for the selected isotopies[5] is justified by the axiologic value subscribed by the first type of consciousness that engages the speaking instances [the dedubling of the auctorial instance] in the text-discourse of Stanescu's essays.

Stanescu's originality is an exclusivist axiological principle, almost in the spirit of the avant-garde[6]. Stanescu's literary beginning is a natural episode of the state of Shiller's esthetic man: the „fight" with tradition, the exit from the system, the construction of a freedom of action:

„Să dezbrăcăm ideile de forma lor tehnică (techne) şi vor apărea ca străvechi sentinţe ale raţiunii comune, ca fapte ale instinctului moral pe care natura, în înţelepciunea ei, l-a dat omului pentru a-i sluji ca tutore, ***până când o inteligenţă luminată îl va proclama responsabil****"*

[Schiller, 1989: 252]

Stanescu's novelty is found in the obsesive monologue of the consciousness on the assumption of man's responsability of his deeds. From here, the sentence: *„Poetul nu are biografie. Biografia lui e opera!"* And also the actuality of the pretext that proposes the dichotomy unity vs. Diversity. Paraphrasing Schiller [1989], each consciousness is *„inteligenţa ce îşi proclamă propriul om responsabil"*!

Complementary knowledge fills the gaps in a continuous cognition on the level of the so-called "organ of continuous knowledge": *poetry*. Man aspires for integrality, for a total knowledge: ilimitation, infinity and the integrality of the consciousness as a dedoubling into concept and being. The relation between consciousness and the world is primordial and fundamental in knowledge. The totality, the absolute, is the real that is necessary to knowledge. Without exaggeration, we consider the text-discourse of Stanescu's essays to be an ontic journey guided by the consciousness as a purely intentional act.

The order proposed in the reading of Stanescu's essays follows the textual meaning of the individual consciousness (the consciousness of the speaking instance) that goes through the stages of the collective consciousness of mankind and its existence (by poetry). It is a possible answer to Hegel's "phenomenology of the spirit", about "the summing model on the logic and historical level":

„Treptata cunoaştere şi revelare de sine a Spiritului, evoluţia prin fazele care-l duceau spre deplina conştiinţă de sine, era un mecanism imaginar,[...] ***o paradoxală „fantezie reală"****, capabilă să îmbine fantasticul şi realul, compensând mental o înapoiere reală şi transpunând speculativ o tot atât de reală înaintare istorică."* [Hegel, 1996: 97]

We see how Stanescu's diegesis, a construct of paradoxism, „exposes" its imagery according to the same diaristic principle: an imagey built upon „dianoia" and „phantasio" – reason and phantasy, the option of the esthetic ego for poetry as an organ of total knowledge:

„Lumea unui poem adeseori este mai adevărată decât însăşi convenţia lumii văzută prin simţuri.[...] Iar cât despre simţuri, roţile noastre, de maşinării infernale ce suntem,

[5] Either those in the host essay-cycle (*Contemplarea lumii din afara ei*), or those in *Scrisori de dragoste...*

[6] Reţinem avangardistul pentru a vedea, în final, la care mişcare literară, curent sau şcoală poetologică accede spiritul stănescian. Noi înclinăm că s-ar afla între neomodernitate şi postmodernitate, în spaţiul imaginal care tocmai se consumă într-o posibilă lectură.

curgând neliniştitor de zgomotos şi tinzând către real, către concret, către logos, ele, simţurile sunt latura feminină a existenţei[...]*"*

[1990, FP/ *Ciudatul râs al raţiunii estetice*: 304]

Hemografia, the first essay in *Scrisorile de dragoste*, is a metapoetic discourse that offers a solution to the pretext expressed by the equation poet (author) – angel (perceptive consciousness) – poetry (creative act) – reader. It is probably the complete and complex equation of poetry as an „imaginary world", as an existential space!

In *Scrisori de dragoste*[7]*sau înserare de seară*, the Logos of the being becomes a hedonist ubicuum:

„Te surprinzi trăind în cuvinte, în interiorul unui cuvânt, nişte mişcări intime. Ca o prietenie, cuvântul se umflă câteodată, după voia visătorului, în bucla unei silabe. În alte cuvinte totu-i placid strâns. Repaosul intim există în cuvânt."

[Bachelard, 1957; 2003: 175]

The textual meaning of the essays is managed from the point of view of a perceptive consciousness from which the essay-writer proposes the population of the logos:

„Percepţia e „literală": o imagine perceptivă întâlnită arată că [...] trebuie recreată, parafrazată, imprimată din nou în expresie. Imaginea ţine de cunoaştere. Percepţia, de „cunoştinţă".[...] imaginea presupune o cunoaştere anterioară, pentru a putea fi aprehendată; percepţia oferă chiar originea" [Şt. Mincu, 1991: 29]

The essay's first sequence, a paradox of the imagining consciousness, played on the principle „answer...without a question" (*„Muzica este un răspuns, căruia nu i s-a pus nici o întrebare"*) has as a logic interpretation the argument of the auctorial instance present in another essay: „[...] *muzica autentică este meta-sonoră". **Ut musica poesis !***

Perceptive representation assumes the existence. It is the mechanism by which the artist returns to the real: a hype-dense sphere, an interval between the anteriority and the posterity, between involution and evolution, minus infinity and plus infinity, minus-knowledge and plus-knowledge (Blaga).

„Conştiinţa perceptivă întemeiază o stare. Conştiinţa imaginantă[8]*depăşeşte percepţia şi o modulează după concepte*" [Şt. Mincu, 1991: 32]

During the second sequence of *Scrisori de dragoste...* [the semiosis in chapter III / 2.1] the imaginative consciousness is read from a metapoetic discourse: living in the space of art, in the poetic logos, Ioachim and Toma debate over the difference between *thinking in images* and *thinking in notions* [1990, FP/ *Tulburătorul „nu ştiu ce"*: 15], between *image* and *perception* [1990, FP/ *Cuvintele şi necuvintele în poezie*: 33-34], from the perspective of the word, which they are to live in. The postulations on the word plead for a poetic metalinguism.

From the semiosic process proposed by the essay instance doubled by the protagonists of the discourse, the meeting between poet and implied-reader, master and discipol, we underline the postulations on the word:

[a] The word is defined by „understanding" and „well-understanding" in relation to a thing (object).

---

[7] „*Love is a closure that remains closed; to love, one that opensDragostea e o închidere ce rămâne închisă; iubirea, una ce se deschide"* [Noica, 1990: 26].

[8] ... related to the esthetic Man, living in the abstract space of art.

[b] The words and things (objects) communicate contextually: [the linguistic sign's simultaneity with the contextual object]

[c] The logic interpretant confirms the metalanguage on each level:

[a] metaword;

[b] metalanguage;

[c] metapoetic language.

We consider the sequence refering to the existing meaning as necessary to our approach on the perceiving consciousness in the center of the logos. The transgression through the „orange tunnel" is obvious from the perceptive meaning to the poetic meaning proposed by the imaginating consciousness through „cold" / reason and warmth / feeling, in the sense that: poetic communication between the sacrifice, „the cold of Golgota" (and the connotation of Golgota was thought from the perspective of the drawing that accompanies the poem *Ars poetica*) and endophasic meaning, interior „combustion", experience („feeling", as the poet says). The isotopies / feeling and /reason/ generate in the poetic space the sensible imaginary and the inteligible imaginary.

What is the purpose of the poet-author, proposing as a pretext the perceiving „node"? Why the sacrifical connotation for „the cold". It is also the essay-writer instance that supports the paradox of the „heavy load" animating the isotopy /sacrifice/:

„Toma, nu crucea e grea, căci nimica, îţi zic, nu are greutate; fulgul e greu, căci e prea plin de frigul Golgotei" [1990, FP / *Scrisorile de dragoste* ... : 330]

The paradoxist utterance reflects the simultaneity of Yes and No (from the poetic universe) on the level of the phrase as well as on the semantic level (between „cross" and „flake"). Therefore, in the phrase: the first paradox is represented by the level of the syntactic relation materialized in the coordinating relation, by the relatem „but", which may be substituted by the punctuation sign of the copulative juxtaposition relation („;"); the elypse of the adverbial „but" changes the logic of thinking as for a perfect contrast with an expression like: „the cross is not heavy and the flake is heavy" – from where the occurence of the second paradox – this time not a paradox of the syntactic construction, but a semantic one. But we know that paradoxes are the bases of universal truths. Here, the association between „cross" and „flake" is not random, but has as a common element the acute perception of the cold, the initially active centered isotopy in the act of poetic significance production. The third paradox takes place on the level of the verbal paradygm by a double negation: the „no" negative adverbial modeler and the „nimica nu..." corelatives construction, as the interpretation is that of heaviness as being, as dynamism, since the word:

„El este trecerea stândă locului, locul mişcării dinlăuntru, adică semnul.[...] *singurul care este în afară."* [1990, FP / *Scrisorile de dragoste* ... : 328]

„Cuvântul prin memorarea lui static, şedere şi rădăcină în situaţia lui ulterioară, deci din extatic, în extaziere, în mişcare." [1990, FP /*Scrisorile de dragoste*: 329]

Thus we interpret by the metonimy „cold" as „sacrifice of the being", „the following root [of the word], in ecstasy!"

„By all means!!"

By the emphatic modeler „by all means" a persuasive end is written, encouraging for the interpreter (author → implied-reader) that has gained the possesion of the real by receiving and using the metalanguage. Space will also be of an artistic nature.

The [c] sequence is nothing else than a metapoetic discourse. Sacrifice: carrying his cross, each man contemplates the body → *word* →*Logos*: „*a ara arare*" of words! „By all means"..., here, the isotopic series of reference for the metaconsciousness is compressed. The transpoetisation is mediated by the *process of real signification* defined stylistically by:

„(1)*funcţia denominativă: prin limbă, omul dă nume lumii extraverbale, reprezentând un prim grad de cunoaştere, prin fixarea unei anumite identităţi virtuale, dincolo de perceperea ei individuală;*(2)*funcţia predicaţională, de comunicare a cunoaşterii: identitatea virtuală, în sine, devine identitate reală pentru protagoniştii câmpului semiotic, în dezvoltarea unui al doilea grad de cunoaştere."*

[Irimia, 1999: 30]

Ut pictura poesis!

The germinal metaphor of the *seed* is the suggestion of lyrism, and the *ideea of seeding* manages the process of poetical significance:

„[...] *Sămânţa este sacră, cum vă zic! / Cuvintele în jurul ei sunt un nimic!*

Mă-ntorc şi gem şi sânge-mi curge, / iar gura mea e gura ta,

idee, demiurge!" [1983, *Noduri şi semne*: *Ars poetica*]

„Semnele sunt transparente în raport cu sensul", reads the postulation to which Semiotics often returns. The name of sign is attributeed to an entity that is related to something else. As the essay-writer puts it:

„E vorba despre intersecţia dintre ceva şi altceva. Adică este vorba despre cuvânt. Să nu zici că nu ţi-am zis." [1990, FP / *Scrisorile de dragoste* ... : 330]

Or: „[...] *poezia este* ***o acţiune*** *şi atunci când acţiunea ei are şi sens, o direcţie, mişcarea ei către ceva are natura revelaţiei, iar de la ceva către altceva natura cunoaşterii"*[s.a.] [1990, FP / *Pagini de jurnal*: 504-505]

Note: The apparently dialogic nature of the discourse of the auctorial instance with the reader, both of them de-doubled by characters, we may define the tomist principle in the sense of an infiltration of an ethic code of „good behaviour" of the reader through the interential „forests" of the texts.

The note of self-reflexivity of the sign is not supported: the sign is not autothelic. The meaning of the sign is developed in a relational network [an argument for textual analysis] with the things, with the true state of the matter. The transparency of the sign is in its ability of inofesive substitutio of the arbitrary qualities by other qualities meant to fulfil the same goal. The transparent entities are linguistic expressions in the sensible semantic field (all that is related to feeling).

We return to the essay *„Scrisorilor de dragoste sau înserare de seară"*, which is nothing else than the poetic essay's version to the semiosis of the act of literary communication, exemplified in our research by Stanescu's discourse in the essay: a metapoetic discourse!

The Logos is present in the manifestation of the pre-ethic phenomenon as a space of the poetic consciousness. In *Avant-sentimente...*, the introductory words to *Fiziologia poeziei / The Physiology of poetry*, we read:

„[...]*vom socoti fiziologia poeziei ca un fenomen pre-poetic, având ca scop cuvântul văzut ca vehicul al unei tensiuni de conştiinţă nenoţionale. Evident se poate povesti şi despre o fiziologie a ideilor, dar aceasta constituie obiectul unei pre-etici* [...]*"*

[1990, FP: 12]

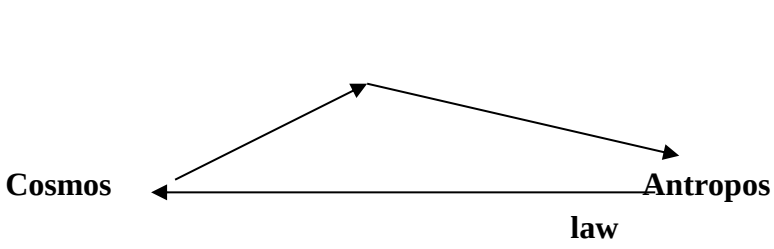
The word is the only law, it is the order to which the spirit aspires, from where the mediating equations of the isotopies which exist in the text-discourse of the the essays:

Word (logos)= law (antropos)= order(cosmos)

The mediating isotopic model may also be represented graphically in the triadic model, fundamental in the process of semiosis on the act of poetic communication, which is the subject of the essay:

„Spaţialitatea actului comunicării ne apare ca un lucru deschis meditaţiei noastre"

[1990, FP / *Scrisorile de dragoste ...* : 330]



The „existing" from the universe (Cosmos) is controled by the Logos by the word which expulses objects, a real (in Hartmann's esthetic: „the chamber of objects"). The perceptive consciousness manifests its option for the real, taking the „existing" and confering an imaginative existence in the consciousness. It is the linear representation of poetic semiosis:

Legein → Poiein→ Poesis !

Note. *Legein = a vorbi; poiein = to do, to desire; poesis = esthetic object* (and *rereading*)!

Imaginary worlds created by an imagining consciousness return to the cosmos as order, as the Logos populated now by the ethic Man. The existential circuit has the memory of the myth of eternal return. By *mimesis*, the reader is prepared by the essay spirit to take the place, if not become the creator of existence himself:

„*Toma, eu ard ca să-ţi dau foc. Degeaba stelele care ne ţin răcoare. Degeaba umbra. Când umbra va da foc copacului, ne vom bucura de arsura fructului său. Toma, fructul şi sămânţa nu sunt un scop, sunt numai un mijloc. Nu despre sămânţă este vorba , ci despre însămânţare."*

[1990, FP /*Scrisorile de dragoste*: 333]

By the paradoxical construct of the internal combustion, the auctorial instance proposes at least two inferences, both of poetic nature: (1) „burning" becomes „ash", a lexem with mythic significance / the Phoenix bird /, an interpretation with individual relevance; (2) while, here, the uttering ego, by the continuous present, „I burn", suggests the myth to the

receiver. The utterning instance „burns" itself in the reception of the poetic act: a universal *catharsis!*

„Poet este acela care naşte. Acela care îl face pe cititorul cuvântului lui mai poet decât pe sine însuşi, acela care îşi transformă coşmarul său de om chinuit în vis de copil care are bucuria jocului." [1990, FP / *Scrisorile de dragoste ...* : 333]

The law is not only the good, it does not only signify the virtues in the ethic code but, like the laws in Plato's dialogue [*Criton*] they are beings, possessing a soul and a spirit:

„Spaţiul etic e spaţiul existenţial născut prin dinamica principiilor neutre. Principiul neutru e o materie morală înrudită cu habitus-ul tomist: e o orientare posibilă, o predispoziţie încă neactualizată a firii individuale." [Pleşu, 1994: 68]

To see the truth of the isotopic synonimy *word = law = order*, the writer puts himself in balance with communication and formulates the law. The artistic consciousness led to the stage of Ethic Man participates to an organic law, transformed into interior biography: the work as a biography memorates the existential meaning:

„Poetul nu are biografie! Biografia poetului e opera lui[1985, Antimetafizica] *„Legea supremă: textul acesta are corp (sens literal), suflet (sens alegoric) şi spirit (sens esoteric)."* [Pleşu, 1994: 37]

The essay-writer proposes a journey into the self-consciousness in order to mediate a real and a total knowledge starting and returning to consciousness. It is a circular trajectory, a sphere. Exiting itself, the Spirit wanders around the world, returning into the topophily! Hurried, altruist, the creative spirit is guilty of a topo-analysis in the meaning introduced by Bachelard::

„Top-analiza,[...] *studiu psihologic, sistematic al stilurilor vieţii noastre intime,*[...] *intimitate sinonimă cu valoarea ontologică.*" [Bachelard, 1957; 2003: 6]

In a twilight of destiny, it evades from the possible worlds, finding its freedom in interiority. Here, the ethic Man will put order into things, into objects, returning to the originary intimacy of the being, in order to receive the daimon! The perfect meeting of Enghidu and Ghilgames thus takes place: in the self for the self!

In the aspiration for the cosmos, the man liberated himself from feeling, from "subjectivisms", transforming into a word as an authentic nature. Thus, the man is restored his rights with his own being… and the word will be his body.[9]

And the natural aspect of the ontic meaning is produced by the "separation that that brings closer", as the spaces of intimacy do not belong to the cosmos (the natural space), antropos (the artificial and abstract space, which is an invention of the esoteric consciousness) but to the logos. Not only the objects the domestic features of which makes the destiny visible, but especially the body: the last world populated is that of the metaconsciousness, a world the man aspires to by the convention of a "cosmic trust" [Bachelard].

„În anumite etape ale conştiinţei mele, mă gândeam dacă limbajul nu poate fi depăşit printr-un metalimbaj, lingvistica printr-o metalingvistică, cuvintele printr-un metacuvânt. Era

[9] Note. The reading of Stanescu's essay does not end with *Scrisori de* dragoste or *Razgandiri.* We follow the order suggested by the essay consciousness by the reading of the essay cycles: *Nevoia de artă, Naşterea poeziei (Antimetafizica), Cuvinte şi necuvinte*, the subject of which, poetry and the poet, ars poetica, fulfill Stanescu's subject of the othos.

o perioadă de impas, pentru că aveam nevoie de ***un metatrup şi de o metaconştiinţă*** *pentru un cuvânt zdravăn, sănătos, real. Nu cuvintele trebuie perfecţionate, ci trupul*.[...]*"* [1990, FP / *Pagini de jurnal*: 517]

In order to find the ethic order of poetry, we must come to it from above, seat hypothetically in a "something else" of it, into a *metaworld* and than continue *The search for the tone / Cautarea* tonului, a poem that leads us to a hyperworld!

„Înger? / Înger... / Nu, nu e bine!
Va să zică, de la început! / Înger? / Nu, nu e bine înger! [sequence 1]
Va să zică, adică nu culoare, / nu auz, nu miros, nu
Nu, nu sunt bune! [sequence 2]
Înger? / Nu, nu e bine înger [sequence 1]
Să luăm trei nume frumoase, [sequence 3]
Trei nume frumoase şi atât, / Va să zică trei. / Bineînţeles Voichiţa,
După Voichiţa ce merge? / Înger? / Nu, nu e bine înger. [sequence 1]
Raluca merge după Voichiţa./ Va să zică mai întâi Voichiţa,
după Voichiţa, Raluca, [sequence 3]
şi după aceea înger. [sequence 1]
Înger? / Nu, nu e bine înger, / Altceva, alt nume! [sequence 4]
Doamne, ce merge după Voichiţa şi Raluca?
A .Andra ,/ B. Beatrice ,/ C. of Doamne, Nu, nu merge! / Am găsit!
Chira ./Şi dacă am găsit Raluca, Voichiţa, Chira – [sequence 4]
După aceea, bineînţeles, înger. [sequence 1]
Nu, nu merge înger! / Nu se loveşte.
Altceva, altceva, altceva, altceva... [sequence 1]
De fapt nici să te naşti nu e ceva nou / şi nici să mori nu e ceva nou.
Nu, nu e bine ./ A scris-o înainte Serghei Esenin ... [sequence 5]
Altceva, Altceva, altceva, altceva... [sequence 1]
Nu credeam să-nvăţ a muri vreodată ./ Nu. Nu. Nu e bine!
E exclamarea lui Mihai Eminescu ./ Nu, nu... [sequence 5]
A fi sau a nu fi, / Aceasta-i întrebarea!
Absolut bineînţeles că aceasta-i întrebarea
Mă şi mir că a mai fost pusă. [sequence 5]
Cred că am găsit ceva, însă:
Tristeţea mea aude nenăscuţii câini
pe nenăscuţii oameni cum îi latră. [sequence 6]
Nu, nu e bun, / E vechi, e vechi... [sequence 7]
Deci, înger... / Nu, nu e bun înger! /Deci înger?
Nu, nu, nu e bun... / Deci înger? / Nu. / Deci înger?" [sequence 1]
[*Căutarea tonului*, 1990: 205-206]

The lyric discourse of the pulsatory type proposes a poetics of suggestion built on the laitmotive of rhetoric interrogation. The confrontation of the „tone" (a metaphor for style, unitary tone of the writing) with the „consumed" poetic realities in poetry offers the fixed lay-out of Stanescu's stylistic paradygm. On this lay-out, the metaphors play their game by

revealing, in the six sequences, the revelations of poetic tones. The inventory includes romantic poetry [2], symbolist poetry [3], modern poetry targeting the metalinguistic language [4], or the intertextual language [5]. The state of grace in front of poetry is communicated by the originality of the tone given by the perceptive consciousness [6]:„*Tristeţea mea aude nenăscuţii câini / pe nenăscuţii oameni cum îi latră"*. It is the verse that illustrates best the „ontological mutation" of poetry. It is the poetic style of lucidity, of „inverted experience", a metaphor deciphered by the present continuous tense:

„Ideea filosofică decisivă a prezenteismului generalizează o intuiţie comună: prezentul e singurul timp real; trecutul şi viitorul conţin timpul ca posibilitate: posibilitatea orientată spre realitate(trecutul), posibilitate desprinsa din realitate (viitorul)." [Toşa, 2004: 121]

It is not inability that stopped Nichita Stnescu. Existential restlessness [7] seeks on the tone of poetry [1].

Tone... Each object of the sensible world corresponds to an image in the intermediary world which, itself, corresponds to a shining archetypal reality in the supreme world of intelligence. The median "image""[10] is an analogon of the sensible object, an archetype[11] of the mundus imaginalis[12] [Pleşu, 2003: 58] The imaginary world is the first „landscape" seen immediately after leaving the terrestrial cardinal system:

Deci înger? / So angel?

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[10] Image = The German meaning *Bild*, which may be understood as Gestalt, as lat. *formac*
[11] Archetype = a „model" of *Bild*, its „essential" witness in front of God.
[12] „Imaginary" vs. „imaginal", respectively „imagined" vs. „known by image", e.g. *topoi* dedicated to Western culture [Corbin, apud Pleşu, 2003: 61]

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Narrative Strategies in Mircea Horia Simionescu's Dictionar Onomastic

Dictionar Onomastic *made Mircea Horia Simionescu famous during communism by its usage of postmodernist techniques and spectacular ingenuity. Highly acclaimed as a masterpiece of parody, pastiche and avant-guard-like deconstructing goals, the novel successfully camouflaged a secret, tragic dimension, motivating its nihilist approach on culture. Nevertheless, a powerful anti-communist system of messages works on the sub-textual level of the book, making it a meta-fictional work.*

The literary criticism of the communist epoch created a paradoxical status to Mircea Horia Simionescu, which was as strange as it was full of advantages for the immediate posterity. There is not doubt that the literature in *Ingeniosul bine temperat* was uncomfortable not only for the official line of the cultural ideologists, but also for the few courageous critics who where forced to notice in their analysis of the texts an unusual strangeness for the middles of communism, a humoristic spirit, permanently ready to trivialize with the serious themes and to brutally cut into the structure of taboos. After all, *Ingeniosul bine temperat* is mainly the spectacle of a temper, that is configured by the text calmly, with a special pleasure of the irrelevant details, with a chimerical profile that betrays, beyond the anecdotic appearance, a tragic profundity, a relativistic vision of things, turned into an acute awareness of the weakening of the world's essences.

The detail that the number of those who saw this appetence for the tragic in Mircea Horia Simionescu's subtext was extremely reduced did not at all increase the chances of the Dictionarul onomastic to be received positively enough by the critics to climb to the top drawer of the contemporary cannon. The accusation might have been that he was breaking too dramatically the connection between literature and life, showing an inconformism that was beyond the tolerance of the epoch. The most trusted critics of the 60 generation were trying to enlarge the concept of socialist realism towards symbolic realism, satiric realism et. Co., but Simionescu's prose would have required a much too complicated procedural compromise for those realisms to be operative in its case.

And so Mircea Horia Simionescu remained in the select company of the initiated, a highly frequented reference in the circles of literary publishing houses but about which there would be no elaborate analyses, but only fragmented writings from the few critics who were holding the luxury of commenting almost anything that seemed valuable. The most important acknowledgment of the Dictionary should have been the review signed by Nicolae Manolescu in 1969, a review which was itself hurried, only identifying the elements of pregnant authenticity of the formula and the frequent techniques of the discourse. In itself, Manolescu's article is a plan of interpretation and integration in the Romanesque phenomenon which is left in draft, in a certain ambiguity which will be solved in the pages dedicated to Mircea Horia Simionescu in Arca lui Noe. The condition of the Dictionary, like that of Bibliografie Generala that followed it, becomes, somehow, a premiere enveloped in discretion of the idea of cultural alternative, of underground, but an underground developed

in the public space of official literature, sharing the same resources with the politic novel but being refused the right to acknowledgment.

The lack of critic reception would start to be cancelled with the ascension of the writers formed in the cenacle *Cenaclul de luni*, who will be delighted by the self-referential mechanisms in the literature of Mircea Horia Simionescu, attracted not as much by the livresque parable but by the parody, by the playful strategies and by the refinement of the demolishing irony. The surface play of the formulas, the unusual talent of the writer for a virtually unlimited multitude of discoursive styles, the deconstructive verve and the de-mystifying ambition immediately took the step from the condition of simple figures of discourse in that of elements of a poetics of the novel. For many, Mircea Horia Simionescu remains a humorist and his Dictionary a comedy of literature, by a reduction that is similar to that eliminating the philosophic fascination from alchemy.

The very structure on which Mircea Horia Simionescu builds his literary edifice indicates with ostentation the gravity of the project, the seriousness that undermines the appearance of a game. An unstoppable energy does not allow any relaxation of the imagination, exulting in instantaneous expansions which come out of nowhere. The dictionary contains, as any autonomous universe, its own laws of coherence, the grammar and logic articulated by its own laws of verosimility. A universe that permanently pulsates words, the text sustains its vital energy from the dialectics of some turbulences and normalizations of its own interiour order. The appearance is of a textual world that has escaped from the control of the Author, organized into its own centers of power, precipitied in a Brownian way under the narrators' microscope.

As a matter of fact, the narrator often goes into the posture of an observer who takes notes, in the apparently innocent and lucid convention of the dictionary file, about an entire narrative screenplay, alimented by a network of micro-narratives who are in a contest with the evolution of the species of writing and with history itself. The classic argument between Cratyllos and Hermogenes is naturally solved in the advantage of one or of the other, because the names here match naturally on the phantasmatic protagonists that are associated to them, or, on the contrary, force them to match their face and letter. The name becomes itself a narrative, a minimal norm of the epic, containing in itself a virtual side that the Dictionary provokes to confession. But the story is no longer the oral one, said in the middle of the agora in order to be carried away and re-told around the corner. Once consumed into the dictionary file, it is classified because, in its archival nature, the dictionary established boundaries and holds the signification in them. This is in fact one of the dimensions of the narrative in Simionescu's text: that of manifestation of the name into meaning. The narrator uses here a strategy of conspects, thought as polemics with the expectance horizon of the virtual reader, but also with the permanently constructed and faked previsibility of the dictionary itself. Usually, the narrative is built by the magnetic effect of the names' phonetic aspect, but its resonance refers each time, even contradictory, or especially contradictory, to the celebrity of the natural association of meaning. Shocking by the de-mystifying ostentation, the story becomes the expression of a possibility, but the game is often without a finality, because this contraction into the everyday dimension of biographies also means the dramatic experience of human fragility. About CLEOPATRA the Dictionary says, starting from two characterial

enumerationand generating an epic line:: *„Agresivă, trăsături aspre, în piatră. Scrie piese de teatru (când poartă părul tăiat scurt) sau e vânzătoare în vreun magazin (în care e foarte elegantă şi vorbeşte gros). CLEOPATRA RAREŞ ... trăia singură, retrasă, se ferea de privirile oamenilor. Adesea, nevoită să iasă înainte de prânz, se ascundea de căutătura bărbaţilor sub un voal cenuşiu. Lumea şoptea că e sfântă. Într-adevăr, de la fruntea arcuită, până la paşii aplicaţi cu smerenie ca pe luciul unei ape, Cleopatra Rareş era însufleţită de spiritul sfânt..."* Suddenly, the miraculous, Christic register is broken by a parenthesis, by an intrusion of the everyday aspect of existence, which accelerates the dramatic details of a micro-narrative ending in a surprising tragic way and being solved in a saving hypothesis: : „*-Cum, Cleopatra Rareş locuieşte în blocul vostru? O cunoşti? – făcu într-o zi prietena mea Marcela G. – Biata femeie! A fost cândva de o frumuseţe răpitoare. Un diplomat căsătorit a întreţinut-o ani de zile într-un adevărat palat, la Şosea. Primea vizite ilustre, în saloanele ei se petrecea în fiecare seară, până la zori. Ce risipă de lumină, de băuturi scumpe! Ce femei frumoase petreceau acolo! Ştiu că, desfrânata, n-a trăit degeaba! Se dusese faima rafinamentului cu care regiza nopţile de dragoste!*

Dar viaţa aceasta a avut un sfârşit trist. Cleopatra Rareş s-a îmbolnăvit îngrozitor. A fost operată: tumoră canceroasă uterină. I-au scos tot. Când a reintrat în lume era alta. Până şi chipul şi-a schimbat trăsăturile. A devenit femeia angelică pe care lumea o priveşte cu sfială. Mintea femeii infirme acuză viaţa dinainte, fiind convinsă că Cel-De-Sus a pedepsit-o pentru desfrâul ei..."

What is seen here, in the micro-narrative space of CLEOPATRA's dictionarry file is, in fact, a little miracle, recorded in a register that simulates facility but in fact transcripts a parabolic scenery, on a myth of the courtesan which descends, as an archetype, through the history of Western culture down to Mary Magdalene. The narrative is therefore an intersection of referential vectors which oscillate from the cultural allusion of the name to the illusion of authenticity in the everyday life of the epic hypothesis and from the intrusive self-reflection of the narrator itself in the text to the spectacular regression in the mythological imagery.

But, of course, the narrative does not always posses the constant disposition for expansion. The mirror of the imaginary reflects the name in different ways, and it may act as an oracle or may reject the dialogue. The names are brought on the boundary of a vide and put, without precautions, to utter themselves, and the echo seems to belong to the hazard more than to option. Where the narrative becomes implicit, being held in the subtext of a few explicative sentences, a principle of profound ambiguity dissolves the logical resistance of the utterances. The story, contracted to a short paragraph, is nevertheless equally functional, even though the criterion of invention disarms here any logic attempt: *„INES,* notează M. H. S., *Păr de aur, mâini de aur, pântece de aur. Idol cuminte de familie. Stricător de familie".* Most often, the explanation is used in order to discourage by its certainty, but the possiblity of truth is always disputed by a dialectics of disimulation: „*KAI Nume nordic, ce n-a coborit, ca altele, odată cu vânturişul neamurilor: Kai Kajanus apare într-o veche legendă finlandeză*".

It is also in the Dictionary... that Mircea Horia Simionescu inaugurates in a prototypal form the method of quoting from invented bibliographies, the single coherence criterion of which may still be deduced from the logic of contradictions in the references to the real. The

narrative becomes, under these circumstances, an amphibian instance of the world of discourse, levitating between the two vides, in the pressurized space that separates them. One is the semantic vide of the real world and the other belongs to the livresque, to culture, to the imaginary world of literature. From their compression the Dictionary gains its epic combustion, managing to draw its own inconsistent being, to create a third space of potentiality. The narrative imagines in the world of the Dictionary but its metaphors resonate in and from the real, just as they irradiate in and from culture, while the third referential domain is the Dictionary itself, where an intratextuality works in a sometimes too obvious manner on the work table of the reader.

But the ambitions go far deeper in the profound structure of the world, which becomes homologue to the world of culture, loosing its substance, its resistance as real as it transfers it into the circuits of the Dictionary. On the other hand, the Dictionary empties the culture of fiction and brings it closer to the condition of the real. The result is, of course, a spectacular one: the dictionary turns the real into fiction and viceversa, while it itself is something of the both.

Where the narrative conventionally forgets its pretext and becomes the protagonist, extending into the draft of an epic scenario, it is invaded by symbolic and speaks at a parabolic register of the discourse. The associations of imagery are unexpected, on the limit of absurdity, and therefore the connection with Urmuz made by the literary critics from Manolescu to Mircea Iorgulescu. The characters also inherit the exotic aspect and the mechanical determinism of the objects in *Pagini bizarre*, reciting in the dialect of some profound revelations. MARCEL becomes a strange story, subtitled *Bicicleta cu marsarier*, which starts in a hurried confession written in childish tone about the magic properties of the unusual means of locomotion. Apparently a bike like any other, once chose by the first person protagonist it gains a special feature – the march-arriere. Its passenger keeps a diary of the fantastic journeys between things extracted from dreams or projected into the dreams from the world of toys. When it carries the character, the bike in fact accesses the world differently, like it appears, infra-real, to the imaginary of a child. The adventures are like those in Alice in Wonderland and their initiation aspect is also carefully drawn. Trains and small toy-soldiers, kangaroos and giraffes, puppies and crocodiles, cows, villages and dwarves – all form the geography of fantastic elements of childhood, and the magic bike gives them coherence. In addition to that, it is not only a solution for access, but also for returning from fantasy into the real. Of course, these are all consequences of it being a bike with march-arriere and, by going backwards, the child re-lives, in an inverted sense, like in a cliché of nowadays cinematography, the experiences of the journey with the bike's wheels up, with the sun under the pedals – therefore twisting the determinations of Physics and, with them, the conventional perception of the world.

This story of MARCEL may as well function as a self-reference norm of the entire literature in Mircea Horia Simionescu's Dictionary. The apology brought to the game, at a certain moment, which was quoted by almost everybody from Manolescu cu George Pruteanu at the publishing of the Dictionary is, as a matter of fact, an apology for the playful ritual. Mircea Horia Simionescu is not just a playful writer but also a dramatic tempered one, a consciousness that feels tragically the passing nature of things and satisfies his destructive,

demolishing instinct in the energetic nostalgia of the game. This is the point where the function of a meta-novel of the text becomes clear, to use the term associated with the School of Targoviste Romanian writers. The dictionary speaks equally of itself, of its condition and conditioning as a universe, as it confesses about the illogic nature of the real world, about the human existence's emptying of meaning.

As any deconstruction, Mircea Horia Simionescu's Dictionary exploits a crisis, which is no different to that of the world's secularization in modern times, over which the acid alluvium of Western weak thinking is put. The epic spectacle of each piece of micro-narrative confesses equally about a game of puzzle and about the impossibility of the game, about potentiality and vide. In a certain sense, the postmodernist writers have every reason to see in the Dictionary a work that is almost didactically partisan to Ihab Hassan, because it illustrates exactly the death of Great Narratives, the dismemberment of discourse etc.

At a certain point, in a text that is put to explain the name GHERASE, a pseudo-quotation from a pseudo-bibliographic source (Th. Paca) speaks about the literary work in a declamation that hides, under the thin irony, the concept of a small ars organica, essential itself to the narative way of structuring and destructuring of the Dictionary:

„*O operă literară este un sistem de gândire, o secvenţă deschisă în structura fiinţei noastre, în aşa fel tăiată încât să se poată distinge limpede dispoziţia foliilor, a depunerilo şi, totodată, întreaga alcătuire a organizării generale. Se prea poate ca unul sau altul dintre învelişuri să se înfăţişeze ca un obiect eterogen şi să nu satisfacă condiţiile unei epici desăvârşite. Principalul este însă ca, referindu-se la întregul sistem, fiecare parte să acopere bine o zonă a prismei şi să invite la descoperirea universului pe care ea îl cuprinde în interior...*"

As a matter of fact, the very detail that such passages are frequent enough in the Dictionary to be choosable at anytime, without the fear that they could be exhausted, without needing to be saught a long time, induces the sensation of circularity, of covering a core, which lacks, nevertheless, consistency. The ultimate action point of the story is exactly this: the creation of the possibility of a center and its filling with hard meaning. The dictionary seems, in the absence of this center, a perfect edifice, self-sustainable but empty, a complex mine, penetrated by gigantic networks of corridors, created in the hope that it would sometimes self-generate the precious metal in its loins.

A fish waiting for the time when it would conceive inside itself a Jonas – that is the destiny of the Dictionary, the metaphysical target of which is, in fact, the possibility of refilling the last deep layers of the world with transcendence.

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BOOK REVIEWS by Al. Cistelecan / Iulian Boldea / Doina Butiurcă / Dorin Ștefănescu

Caius Dobrescu, *Mihai Eminescu. Imaginarul spaţiului privat. Imaginarul spaţiului public,* Editura Aula, Braşov, 2004

While the essay-writers are a praiseworthy caste (and for this reason an open one), the Eminescian specialists represent a caste of devotion (and for this reason a closed one). Eminescology became even long time ago a kind of esoteric sect, and its specialists act like some priests invested by sacraments rather than exegetes – even though they are extraordinary. As in every cult, there are all kinds of rituals of initiation and investment, mainly based upon apprenticeship and devotion and that forbid the profanes' access in the sacred matter of Eminescianism. When the lay men participate in a rebellion – quite rarely –, hierarchy punishes them, and when a profane dares going too far, till the dimensions of a monographic study, let's say, he is not given the go-by. Through this criteria of drastic separation between experts and profanes, one can justify the Eminescian experts' great silence that dropped on Caius Dobrescu's recent monograph (*Mihai Eminescu. Imaginarul spaţiului privat. Imaginarul spaţiului public,* Editura Aula, Braşov, 2004), leaving it in the hands of some other profanes, even young ones. But at least three of them (Paul Cernat, Andrei Terian and Bogdan Crețu) have done well their job, successfully replacing the busy experts and those that are dedicated to this field. eminescologists could better take account of Caius Dobrescu's book because it could have been useful. And this at least to get out of an irreparable mannerism or even of a crass hermeneutical "hollow". The new eminescology, since Ioana Em. Petrescu's period till now, does nothing but applies Eminescu's work to one new philosopher or another and ascertains satisfied that this philosopher perfectly matches Eminescian vision. This is the only way the eminescology understands to prove Eminescu's up-to-dateness, passing his work from one philosophical system to another and making it able to modulate on all concepts, according to some philosophical wind. The formula is simple and productive: you read a philosopher's work, summarize it, write a sort of breviary out of his concepts, and apply this to Eminescu's work. The results are usually enthusing because one can notice that Eminescu's work can be modulated on every (or almost) philosophy or even on the most contrary philosophies at the same time. This results are not only encouraging but also accurate; and with good reason too, because there is rarely a philosophy that cannot match a work (if this one does not have a certain ideological offer, but even then, the obvious part of the ideology can be repudiated in favour of the immanent part, bringing into relief the unconsciously buried philosophy). If it is so, if the excellent merit of poetry is to devote some philosophy, then it is known that poetry is much philosophical than philosophy itself, because the imagery that poets usually work with, have a certain philosophical grace (poli- and pluri-); they are not a mere philosophy, but a philosophical "fascicle" that can be simultaneously divided into more directions. In such situations the exegetic satisfactions cannot be but enraptured, so much more enraptured as interpretation "sticks in the mud". Interpretation is, of course, theoretically, infinite; in practice it often goes through "stopping points" rather than revolutions; an innovating interpretation has to find an inner principle in the work's dynamics in order to change its comprehension and "irradiation"; no outer principle can revolutionize the meanings of a work; these cannot be moved but from the inside of the vision and not through outer

levers, as useful as they can be. Changes of concept, of mentality and taste involve the work in a continuous, current answer that adjusts an inner principle and does not attach a principle from the outside, as a kind of propeller. This is the reason why there are so few "revolutions" in eminescology, and the most recent are the oldest, taking into consideration that the last ones belong to Ion Negoițescu and Ioana Em. Petrescu. For good reason, some eagerness for a new eminescologic turning point, a change in comprehension and interpretation has to become manifest.

The eminescologists' anxiety is also linked to the possibility that precisely a profane like Caius Dobrescu realizes this decisive hermeneutical turning point. It is a legal and well-grounded fear; Caius Dobrescu's monograph really makes a stressed turning, but we do not know if it is a crucial one. I'd rather say it isn't – and this is not for the eminescologists' peace and calm, but because of the interpretative grid chosen by the author. I quote Paul Cernat (because what he says is true): this grid consists in "rediscussing the work from the point of view of modern themes". It is, in fact, a deliberate confrontation between Eminescu's work and these themes. Technically speaking, Caius Dobrescu reveals the work's up-to-dateness out of a confrontation with an outer principle; technically speaking too, in its mechanical aspect, his initiative resembles more to Edgar Papu's than Negoițescu's (in fact the main discouraged) or Ioana Em. Petrescu's; Edgar Papu confronted/compared Eminescu's work to structuralism, Caius Dobrescu – roughly speaking – to poststructuralism. But this outer principle of confrontation (and approach) is subdued to a continuous introspection, and what one perceives at the beginning as a kind of violence (of the type cultural studies) little by little becomes an organic hermeneutical principle. The grid becomes an introspection and merges with ideology and Eminescian vision, so as its precedence seems a simple procedural issue, because at the end the immanence of apparently delibarate themes is much more visible. This passing from theme to vision, from outside to inside could not have been revealed out of the logic of approach and to the same effect, Bogdan Crețu has reason to ascertain the existence of a "thesis prior to argumentation" (then finished through what he calls "a maieutics turned upside down"); and premeditation /intention does not reach conclusions but remains at the level of clear premises and concepts; once they are clearly set forth, the theme is rendered sensual in a refined analysis, and conclusions come out, they are not induced or drawn with authority. It is the point when Caius Dobrescu not only confronts exegetic themes to Eminescian vision, but also makes them organic; what seems to come from the outside, actually results from within poetic vision. Thus, Caius Dobrescu's monograph may realize the decisive exegetic "leap" and even overturn things.

Caius Dobrescu starts from a premise that is covers his entire monograph and this is his belief in what can be called poetic activism. For Caius Dobrescu, art is an action; from this point of view, it is never innocent, unwarranted or irresponsible. It is a part of a debate and therefore it can be thought as civic implication. Pending bigotry, we cannot bring any charges against this concept. Willing or not, poetry takes part in meaning and cannot do this without developing social connotations of spirituality and without assuming them. Therefore Caius Dobrescu is right when he says that poetry takes public debates till "unfathomable depths of individual consciousness" and that it reveals "utopia or phantoms" which disturb public space (page 5). A more delicate issue is that whether poetry makes a distinction between the two spaces and promotes them in a kind of visionary and perceptive indistinction. Caius Dobrescu does not believe that things are so

confused and that it is only about "continuous transgressions" which, no matter how serious, they "are not meant to suspend the natural limits between the named fields" (idem) – public and private. We can debate upon whether these "natural limits" really work for the poet, but it is enough that they work for the reader. As it is known, a poetry requires at least two, and in this case at least two perspectives are involved.

Once the autonomy of fields is done (no matter how precarious), Caius Dobrescu takes them one by one, starting from the spaces of privacy to those of socialization, seen, of course, in a permanent relation and correlation. There are four imaginative methods of privacy: "that of *idyll*, that of *fairy baroque*, that of *the complex naturalism-art for art's sake* and that of *analytic novel in verse*" (page 19). As we notice, Caius Dobrescu was not too fond of the unity of criterion in "christening" these four spacial-imaginative units, prefering a heterogeneous list, but more adequate. The trouble is (poets always make troubles to monographs) that "the four structures, no matter how different they are, coexist, and more than this, they interreact or borrow each other their features" (page 20). Caius Dobrescu thinks this could represent "a specific feature of Eminescu's imaginary" (idem). Without hesitating and so much the less checking, I'll immediately say this is a feature of all poets. And not because of some poets who can be scrupulous in delimiting the imaginative methods, but because of imagination as such, that jumbles together all references and refuses to work with different classes. It seems that Caius Dobrescu liked better the idea that poetry itself should suggest this clear systematization instead of the idea that he should pull it out of the visionary ambiguity and of the so complicated imaginative diachrony. Some kind of complexity in front of the ambiguities and mainly in front of the contradictions is all the time revealed and it goes til the end of the monograph. Caius Dobrescu is always astonished by the lack of categorical, linear features and option of Eminescian vision; at least this comes from the fact that it always underlines the contradictory feature of Eminescian vision as a somehow particular fact, rather exceptional than natural: "Apparently incompatible visions and symbolic solutions do not replace one another, but simply coexist, as many times in Eminescian intellectual universe" (page 245). That's it, it seems that Eminescu himself was not fond of accuracy and coherence of ideas and "symbolic solutions" in his poetry; he did not care about whether he would be considered a philosopher, an ideologist or an essay-writer of strict articulation or, on the contrary, an ambiguous and obscure one. But isn't this for the exegetes' benefit who can drag him everywhere? As we can notice, in poetry Eminescu acted like all poets in a nonchalant ideative way. This brings Caius Dobrescu's interpretation to a pass, in the excerpts where it tries to give coherence to the poetic vision and especially to this one in comparison with journalist ideology. Obviously, he often succeeds in this kind of harmonization or at least congruentization (at least with a part of Eminescu's poetry and in a certain imaginative way), but with enough exegetic cleverness. A real trick is the way Caius Dobrescu solves things, such as "the dilemma of the poet's consciousness" in the case of "alegorical politics" in *Scrisoarea III*, where the poet secretively praises the independence war, against the journalist (p. 245-260). Clean or dirty, the trick is believable by its excess of fineness, as all Caius Dobrescu's "text interpretations" are, many of them demonstrations of reinterpretative virtuosity. In all these microanalyses and interpretations Caius Dobrescu is right to expel any arbitrariness and imotivation of signs, but at the same time he exceeds in the scrupulosity with which he wants to give ideative (and sometimes ideological) coherence to imaginative freedom

and ambiguity. Sometimes the contradictions (especially those between the journalist and the poet, but also those between the poet and the poet) are so blatant and irreducible that even Caius Dobrescu cannot "tame" them – or at least justify them – but with the help of a *deus ex machina*. It is exactly the dramatic case of "the dramatic incompatibility between a pessimistic vision of *absolute* biological determinism /.../ and the intensity Eminescu teaches with in his articles a liberating ethics of work, of constructively methodical and constant endeavour" (p. 275). And how can Eminescu and Caius Dobrescu get out of this dilemma? They get out surreptitiously, in two ways: first through the public's dual personality, his division in castes (an opportunity to make the ideative connection between Eminescu and Weberian ethics) and then through the cancellation of castes in favour of the modernization paradox, that belongs to Max Weber too (p. 275-283). Of course if Caius Dobrescu had tolerated a space of uncontrollable and unconventional poetic freedom in immediate coherence (and not only imaginative), he wouldn't have complicated so much; or if he had tolerated at least the autonomy of journalistic and poetic fields. But his monographic art doesn't ever choose the convenient solution, but, on the contrary, the defiance of all difficulties, and some of these come from the homogeneousness of the concept of poetic activism and from the imperative of the coherence of all layers, including the firm incoherence. The acceptance of an irrepressive wildness of vision and of an inviolable nature of ambiguity does not represent the exegesis or an exegete's weak point; the exigency to give everything coherence is, in fact, a sign of oppresion of the work; interpretation dreams to become manipulation through excessive justifications and explanatory reasons; and this is a case of fatal ambition, not *hybris*.

But how can eminescology not make a victim of Eminescu? Especially because it seems not to make Eminescu's work vivid, but just to sing gravely at its funerals. Little by little, but more and more consistently, the change of perspective brought by Caius Dobrescu becomes a change of interpretation, of comprehension. At the end of the monograph we see an Eminescu who walks through the European contemporary issue with the Schengen visa, as Nietzsche's friend of idea or at least of intuition and a friend of other modernist writers. It's true that he does not have eminescologists' visa yet, but this is only because of inherent bureaucratic formalities in any creed organization.

Al. CISTELECAN

Cornel Munteanu, *Românii din Ungaria I, Presa*, Editura Noi, Gyula, 2006

In the argument to the book "Romanii din Ungaria I, Presa" Cornel Munteanu begins with the idea of tradition that Romanian press from Hungary has, a phenomenon favourised both by the representants of the Romanian journalism and by the ones who these publications are addressed to. One can refer to the Romanian press in Hungary between the years 1950-2005. The three chapters of Cornel Munteanu's book contain dense appreciations of the forms of written journalism, about the interferences between the written journalism and the audiovisual journalism and about the part that the press plays in maintaining and consolidating the identity of the Romanians from Hungary, in the first chapter; the second chapter contains a description, of analytic nature, of the written press, from the publication of the first journal, in 1950, "Libertatea Noastra", with

its successive denominations ("Foaia Noastra", "Foaia Romaneasca"), up to the other periodical publications ("Cronica", "Simpozion", "Lumina" etc.). The third chapter of the book is devoted to the audiovisual press, concretized in the tv and radio broadcasts from the territorial studio of Seghedin. The author of the book structures the substance of its research in accordance with two essential criterion: the diachronic criterion, visible through the presentation of the evolution of some journalistic phenomenon or cultural events of bigger or smaller resonance and the synchronic criterion, assumed through the detailed analysis of the contribution of the Romanian journalists from Hungary. The documentary material that Cornel Munteanu used is undoubtedly, vast and difficult to take an account of, to classify and typologize. This is actually, the novelty of the book: the efficient synthesizing of all the journalistic Romanian manifestations in Hungary, in an effort to classify them, to explain the cultural events and at the same time to underline the role of the press in keeping the ethnical identity of the Romanians from this country. As a matter of fact, in the beginning of the book, Cornel Munteanu clearly underlines this: "Both the written and the audiovisual press have an overwhelming role in keeping and enriching the identity dowry for the Romanians from Hungary. It passed its complexes and the lack of means through a frontal and global approach of the matters concerning the comunitary identity. It did not stop at the informative aspect, but approached the major problems of the Romanians with a high degree of professionalism. Besides, the journalism from Hungary also led to the constitution of a valuable homogenous group of journalists; their professional activity, uncertified officially at the beginning or recovered afterwards through a profile training, was done with stateliness and the experience of direct facts in press. The radio-tv broadcast's audience, just like the constant readers of the Romanian journal, is a proof of the respect the community has towards this group of journalists, identified by their own receiver".

Objectivity, as an essential rule of the research, is assumed by the author from the very beginning. Refering to the features, the purpose and the finalities the Hungarian press has proposed, Cornel Munteanu underlines the moral force of such institution, the ethic authority its manifestations reveal, but also its position of "instrument of formation of the national conscience, with the purpose to form the public receiver, to induce some values and to activate the civic spirit." Obviously public opinion plays an important role in Romanian press in Hungary, through the effect of regularization that it justifies and encourages: "As a beneficiary of the press and metronome which measures efficiency and press evolution during its history, the public opinion becomes the act of maturation of the press, the mirror that journalists take as a guide in their job. In comparison with the two references: the public, on one hand and the official power on the other, the press knew how to find out the adequate solution of movement, despite all kinds of compulsions from the two. A compulsion of the public opinion towards which the press could not have compromises and failures, because the public is its main ally, but also a bitter and conjugated compulsion of official power, that can reach the control and the severe censorship of political system, that can impose the publishing line, the politics' line or the content of articles and broadcastings. Between these two opposed compulsions, in matter of action, a free, open, permissive, alternative one, and the other restricted, closed, limited, official, the press knew to confederate with the public, thus being enforced for a common "battle" in front of official power, till gaining its right to independence and freedom of opinion". Report, documentation, education of the public – these represented

the desiderata of Romanian press from Hungary, that had to assume a more militant, more firm and at the same time an imperative condition of moral resources. Identity through language and cultural identity of the Romanians from Hungary are other two desiderata that Romanian press of this geographic space assumed. In his approach, Cornel Munteanu is also concerned about multiple, benefic, profitable interferences that were established during the history between written and audio-visual press, or he dwelt on genres and publicistic forms that found their expression in Romanian press from Hungary: news, article of opinion and attitude, interview, portrait, study, reportage and to a low degree, inquiry.

Refering to written press, Cornel Munteanu makes a thematic classification, distinguishing the report press ("Foaia românească", "Cronica", "Jurnal"), magazine-press ("Calendarul nostru /românesc"), cultural and scientific press ("Convieţuirea", "Almanah Lumina", "Izvorul", "Simpozion", "Annales"), other forms of written press ("Liceenii", "Timpuri", "Informatorul", "Săptămâna română din Ungaria"). Obviously, in order to underline the profile of these periodicals, the author makes a presentation of the editorial staff, but also of the evolution of those newspapers and periodicals during the time, highlightening the hesitations and the first soundings, the the experiences of some periodicals, introducing some editors and contributors, sometimes using too many details and facts (not necessarily benefic). The stress of the approch is on "Foaia românească", a prestigious periodical of the Romanians from Hungary, with a decisive role in assuming and illustrating their consciousness and defining identity mark. Cornel Munteanu is right when he asserts that "nowadays one can speak of high Romanian intellectuals, already constituted and mature, who turns their cognitive and formative abilities to the best account, becoming themselves producers of values. The mirror that accompanied this major act of birth and maturation of these intellectuals' spirit is the Romanian periodical in its entire semicentennial history". Audio-visual press is illustrated by *Aici, Radio Seghedin*, the Romanian broadcast and *Ecranul nostru*, a tv broadcast of territorial studio of Seghedin. Refering to the importance and stateliness of audio-visual press, Cornel Munteanu underlines that "more than the written press, forced to face some ideological pressions of the time and inherent to some compromises in organizing and distributing periodicals, the audio-visual press (radio and tv) enjoyed a value influence that gave a qualitative impulse from one stage to another (...). not last of all, the specific forms of audio-visual had allowed the journalists to move in a larger extent in organizing programmes, enabling editors' individual initiatives in selecting materials and choosing the subject of radio or tv broadcasts. The junction between written and audio-visual press that we spoke about in the first chapter, works even today, encouraging the journalists' mobility between the two areas and even the use of some materials common to both mass- media forms of communication". Turning an extremely wide and diverse documentary material to the best account, Cornel Munteanu catalogues, for the first time, in his book, in an efficient and necessary synthesis, the modalities of manifestation and existence of Romanian press from Hungary. His approach astonishes through amplitude of vision, through sufficiently sure mastering of the investigated material, through propensity towards synthesis that can be seen in subsidiary and finally through interpretative-analitical resources that the author has.

Iulian BOLDEA

G.G. Gruiţă, ***Moda lingvistică 2007. Norma, uzul şi abuzul,*** **Editura Paralela 45, 2006**

Published in 2006, at Paralela 45, professor G.G. Gruiţă's recent work is a *radiography* of present-day state of language and has the following subdivisions: The market of words, Politeness at Romanians, Linguistic laziness, Cardboard subjects, The naughty participle, Many and not too small, Anacoluthons, pleonasms and cacophonies.

The favourite sphere of investigation is the written press language (but also audio-visual). The author analogically prefers "linguistic fashion" out of an inner belief that inside the system of a language "the same game between immutable and ephemeral is working, between innovating adventure and traditional obedience, in the same atmosphere of frantic mimesis, but also of vehement appeal" as in fashion (Foreword). From the perspective of Romanian grammatical code, in the form received in EU, the book consistently divides the terms, the linguistic code (the standardized aspect) from the common use, underlining everytime the difference between the two fundamental dimensions: if in Grammatical Code, the future with *o* keeps this auxiliary unchanged, most of the time the written press favours the plural form *or să*, or for the standardized forms *succedă* şi *precedă*, the use of language naturalized the structures: *succede* şi *precede*. We read in the foreword that the Lexical Code also contains: "too many definitions in collision with the use, a fact that makes comprehension difficult and also the equivalence in the lexical code of other languages spoken in EU", no matter whether we keep in mind the older parts of language or the neological sphere. Communication is also difficult because of the aberrant syntactic structures, placed outside logic and grammar, such as annacoluthon. Present-day state of language develops slowly, almost insignificantly and towards the "wooden language" as "the public discourse is too much diluted, false, resorting to the same cowardly grammar, with frequent refuges in impersonal wordings, without an identifiable subject (...) with generalizing noun infinitives (...) with dehydrated phrases or phrases packed with epithets and crammed metaphors. The custom to hide under the word remained and it is still powerful", the author asserts.

The attention of the study is headed towards the sphere of loan translation, highly productive in the process of language resemantization; its direction is towards the "basis" of Romanian "linguistic pyramid": the semantic initiative, on French "channel" is "consolidated" through English loans in the past few years: *a realiza* < Engl. *to realize*, with a large meaning: *a conştientiza* (to be aware), *a nominaliza* < Engl. *nominalize*, meaning *a propune* (to propose, to suggest), copied from American English, or *locaţie* < Fr. *location* that was Americanized by a semantic addition. Having a model in Saussure's structural dichotomies, the study deciphers the semantic identity, the power of derivation and word formation in the case of some fashionable opposable series; sometimes the assertion is diachronic, and reaches the etymological form: European- nonEuropean (even antiEuropean), professional-dilettantism, amateurism etc.

The journey inside the miraculous world of meaning and form metamorphosis is spectacular in G.G. Gruiţă's book, through the integrant perspective, through the propensity towards universal and symbolic nature of words. And we quote a fragment from the book: "The life of words is (...) much more restless than it seems, and the competition is harsh in here, with strange marginalizations, but also spectacular rehabilitation, with heroes and victims" (page 30). The words have their destiny that

"depends on some inner laws of linguistic system, but also on many different, external, unforeseeable causes that are linked to the development of linguistic community in all forms: social, economic, psychological". There are situations when "the adventure of word" eludes logic explanations, staying in an area of bad luck or luck (...), is taken out in the world at special occasions, by weak minded intellectuals" (page 31).

The public discourse is rendered suggestive in this book through the practice of sportive metaphor, metonymies "of transition" that invaded the general language, in the author's opinion. The chapter *Politețea la români* (*Politeness at Romanians*) underlines not only the semantic identity of two coreferent pronouns (*dânsul, dumnealui*) but also the perspective of an exhaustive approach (*ab initio* they belonged to a system that did not allow innovatio; their metamorphosis is linked to dialectal variants; from total synonymy, the final semantic innovation was that *dânsul* receives a meaning of politeness, but only after "the attraction of personal gender takes place". Contemporary Romanian language uses the form *dânsul* with triple value: regional-archaic (a total synonym of *he*), official (this synonymy is reduced to personal gender, without any kind of politeness), variant in offensive (*dânsul* – personal pronoun of politeness with double interpretation: *dumnealui* – inside the ternary system – *dânsul, dumnealui, domnia sa* and *dânsul* as an equivalent of *dumnealui* and *domnia sa*).

The order of words family name + Christian name, apparently harmless, can create some problems in the context of individual – society – European macrostructure relations, the Romanians' education showing "a deficit at this level". And even so, through interactive broadcasts "where the participants tell their name the way they were taught in schools, in the army", the author's opinion is that we are "on the right road, but we still have a lot of things to do". The words with a strong case government (unmarked genitive and dative) are thought to be real attacks to the linguistic system, besides evading the norm, also showing "linguistic laziness".

The analytic study of "linguistic market" subtly passes from paradigmatic classes and aspects more or less approached in this area, to syntagmatic structures in pragmatics, in the communication act. "Jocul fracționarelor exacte" ("The game of exact fractionals") - "Replica fracționarelor nedefinite" ("The retort of indefinite fractionals") brings up-to-date the category of exact fractionals with grammatical subjects, from the perspective of the relation language - thinking and the noun *parte* (*part*), representing the indefinite fractionals, both from the norm, the government point of view and from the semantic-functional, stylistic point of view ("one can speak about every speaker's subjective preference").

The public discourse, the written press gives the author material and opportunity to ponder, to argue, but also the pleasure to make a dissertation. The titles and subtitles built on analogies or oppositions, as the entire essence of the book, are illustrating: *Insule și peninsule în geografia verbului, Dânsul- singur împotriva tuturor, Adverb+participiu = love (Islands and half-isles in the geography of the verb, He – alone against everybody, Adverb + participle = love).* The last paragraph seems to contain the whole message of the book: "The cacophony does not have to be expelled from the Romanians' linguistic education, but in its approach one must be moderate, must have resilience and a little realism (...) the monster's size, his malefic power is in our mind and it had been inculcated upon us through imprudent education. The politics of peaceful living together with some mutual concesions is much more wise here than the total war, damaging for everybody (…) Some "perl fishermen" boast with finding cacophonies in texts that belonged to famous

linguists or even in some normative studies. But none of them tried to unravel the real meaning of these situations" (page 234).

Moda lingvistică 2007 makes you know the norm, but it also urges you to education in knowledge, the politics of a "peaceful living together" with the language use, in the context of ternary relation: norm – use – abuse, to temperance, resilience in linguistic education.

Doina BUTIURCĂ

Vasile Dem.Zamfirescu, *The philosophy of the inconscious,* Ed. Trei, 2001

We shall approach the subject in the title by a hermeneutical exercise on the book of Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu, *Filosofia inconstientului / The Philosophy of the* Inconscious, structured in three stages: the possibility of building a psychoanalysis as Hermeneutics, the function of religion in psychoanalytic meaning, the relation spirit-soul in the philosophy of the inconscious. 1. About the ways of comprehension any significan phenomenon (in our case the „text" proposed by the inconscious on the level of the dream or of the symptome), Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu uses the distinction by which Paul Ricoeur draws two ways of transforming Hermeneutics into Phenomenology: a short way, suggested by Heidegger, that is an ontology without the exigence of its own analysis and a long way passing through the analysis of the literary language. The first way seeks the truth by substracting itself from any epistemologic assumption and, therefore, to any scientific vocation; without operating with presuppositions of the objective knowledge, it does not identify itself with a science of nature, but with a direct ontology. Instead of an illusory objectivity, as the object is always a purely rational offer closing significations, we are dealing with a real opening of the existence *in* and towards the proposed significations. The problem of truth is no longer a problem of its understanding, but that of the manifestation of the living being that understands in order to exist *in truth*. The second way the Romanian author adheres to considers the being as a way of existence (and the act by which it understands itself as such, more than a simple way of knowledge). This way may only be established in language. Thus the separation of truth from method is avoided, by passing through several stages which are as many steps of the interpretative methodology (semantic, reflexive, existential). There is no pure understanding of pure significations; the significations belong to the existence of the being that understands them in order to understand itself: „Doar reflecţia, says Ricoeur, depăşindu-se pe sine în *existenţă* poate să ne conducă spre rădăcinile ontologice ale înţelegerii" (*Le conflit des interprétations*, Seuil, Paris, 1969, p.15). The Hemeneutics of this indirect way will be structured around the central subject of multiple-meaning or symbolic significations, following the transfer of meaning as a dynamic relation between latency and manifestation. Therefore any hermeneutic approach (including the psychoanalitical one) will attempt to find a certain architecture of the double meaning, the role of which is to show by hiding.

This is the very difinition of the symbol: „orice structură de semnificaţie în care un sens direct, primar, literal desemnează pe deasupra un alt sens indirect, secundar, figurat, care nu poate fi perceput decât prin intermediul celui dintâi" (*ibid.*, p.16). „Pe deasupra"

(*par surcroît*) means an indirect designation that adds to the direct one, as the literal (visible) meaning refers to another sens (invisible) which it super-dimensions and the existence of which it mediates. Interpretation is therefore „activitatea gândirii care constă în descifrarea sensului ascuns în sensul aparent" (*ibid.*). In and by interpretation, the being discovers something like an *archeology of the subject;* the existence appears in this archeology, but it remains active in the process of deciphering it generates. But existence does not appear as transparent without the intervention of the interpretation that casts light on its significations. Being provoked by the will of existing, the Semantics of will is exactly this harmony between the relations of meaning uttered in an analysis of the textual symbolism. For instance, in the symbolism of the dream we are always in the point of junction (in the *hermeneutic node*) of an erotic and semantic level, and the force of the symbol lies in the fact that the double meaning is the very way the dillusion of will is expressed:. „Avem simbol, says Ricoeur in a second attempt of definition, când limbajul produce semne de grad compus în care sensul, nemulţumit să desemneze ceva, desemnează alt sens care nu ar putea fi atins decât în şi prin intermediul său" (*Despre interpretare. Eseu asupra lui Freud*, Ed. Trei, 1998, p.25). The psychoanalitical theory (metapshychology, as Freud calls it) cannot find anything else than what is seeks, that is expressions camouflaged in representations and effects belonging to the most archaic desires of man. But, like any Hermeneutics, it is always confronted with the risk of interpretation (with the risk of its own impurity, as we shall see). Therefore, the existence it may speak of remains an interpreted existence, that is an existence read like a text.

But according to the desire of existential understanding (the interpreter understands in order to understand himself), the philosophic reflection on the pshychology – says V. Dem. Zamfirescu – forces philosophy to move the significations beyond the immediate subject, beyond consciousness. The Cogito, in this case, no longer has the assumption that it may put itself; „el apare ca *deja* pus în fiinţă" (P. Ricoeur, *Le conflit*…, ed.cit., p.25). The archeology of the subject performed by psychoanalysis, considering existence as desire, establishes some sort of ineity of the cogito, which – on the level of the inconscious – is pre-existent to its own self-assertion. *I desire, so I am thinking, thought.* „Această regresiune a sensului spre dorinţă este indicaţia unei posibile depăşiri a reflecţiei înspre existenţă" (*ibid.*, p.24). But what is important is the fact that the psychoanalitical archeology (like the subiacent teleology of the phenomenology of religion) does not appear but „in the interpretative movement that understands a figure by another figure". In other words, the interpretative act implies, as a defining element, the comprehension of a dialectical relation: the passing from one figure to the other and of one figure through another. Therefore, underlines V. Dem. Zamfirescu, „hermeneutica psihanalitică include o tehnică de descifrare a deformărilor", the passing of a figure in and by its disfigurating manifestation. Thus the „condition of the possiblity of psychoanalysis as a Hermeneutics" is put, as the hidden meaning of the dream or of the symptome is the very hermeneutical act of psychoanalysis, its terapeutic vocation. If the latent meaning and the manifest meaning interfere on the level of the last, we are dealing with an effort of o deciphering – in the interior of this dual structure – of an equivocal code.

And this equivocity is the fertile field of hermeneutic interpretation.

2. But how does psychoanalytical Hermeneutics interpret the origin of the religious phenomenon and, generally speaking, the function of religion, considering the difficult relation between the archeology of the subject it considers as an object (or even the ethiology it follows) and the teleology defining the phenomenology of religion? The

answer given by Freudian metapsychology is that of religious representations the economic function of which are exercised by the cultural function. Freudian reductionism (the "hidden" meaning of religion is only the nostalgia refuled in a paternal complex) is the classic expression of any scientific rationalism which, as Jean Borella says in *The Crysis of Religious Symbolism / Criza simbolismului religios*, is defined by the neutrality of the religious symbol, considered even by Hegel as "an alienated figure of the consciousness" and "acceptable to reason". The critical method, accepting a religious zone of the spirit, denies transcendence, interpreting it as an illusion outside of the consciousness. Religion, says Freud, is only "a universal obsessional nevrosis". In this perspective, notes V. Dem. Zamfirescu, , „conţinutul manifest nu este *nimic altceva* decât o metamorfoză [o deformare, *n.n.*] a conţinutului latent, spiritul este doar o prelucrare a sufletului inconştient". „Dumnezeu, says Freud, nu este nimic altceva decât un tată transfigurat" (*Totem şi tabu*), that is its way of manifestation of a spirit, in the sphere of the paternal complex, a metamorphosis or transformation of the latent filial attitude, of the inconscious soul which „creates" according to its own figure the figure of the father. This reductionism is of a psychological order, by the refusal of any metaphisical interference. In a way, Jung is more honest – and more profound – when, trying to circumscribe the presence of God, he recognizes himself the limits of psychologism. What can be done, he says, is only to prove „prezenţa unei imagini arhetipale a lui Dumnezeu şi aceasta este, după mine, tot ceea ce putem spune psihologic despre Dumnezeu". According to a much more complex and permisive perspective than that of his former master, the postulation of this archetype – central in religious experience – has the features of the numinosity. The dream, adds Jung, in almost- anti-freudian terms, is the image of a degenerate religion, „of religious sentimentality instead of the numinous of divine experience. This is the well-known mark of a religion that has lost its mystery".

In addition, another side of Freudian psychoanalitical reductionism is found in the difference of attitude towards art and religion, the first being considerd in intself and the second subordinated to the paternal prototype and therefore minimized. It is significant how Freud treats the figure of Moses as a work of art (in *Moses by Michelangelo*) and as religion (in *Moses and Monotheism*); „pe acel Moise – spune Ricoeur – trebuia să-l glorifice ca fantasmă estetică, iar ca fantasmă religioasă să-l nimicească" (*Despre interpretare*…, ed.cit., p.263).

The explanation could result from Freud's distinction between sublimation and refulation. The artistic works integrate, by sublimation, instinctual energies, solving them positively in culture, while religious symbols are the expression of "the return of the refulated", manifesting primary (natural) tendencies which are not culturally accepted, and therefore dissolved since they translate an unsolved conflict between nature and culture. Religion is therefore exclusively put under the sign of refulation and soul, refusing a religious sublimation and, by closing the religious in the sphere of the soul, any possibility of it to culturally integrate, to spiritually transfigure. Partly, this is a consequence of Freud's positivistic rationalism, as, in *Viitorul unei iluzii / The Future of an Illusion*, says that "there is no instance above reason". On the other hand, in the relation between religion and illusion, religions *is* illusion, as it originates in the world of desires. Religious representations considered to be illusions derived from desires circumscribe severely religion in the field of the psychic, a field where the transcendent appears secularized, but also un-spiritualized, the essence of the religious phenomenon being sought in the zone

of the soul, which compromises its universality and, nevertheless, refuses its purity. Religious phenomena (originating in the soul) are heterogenous elements – of the inconscious, participating to the psychic's impurity as a whole. Their hidden meaning only occults the manifest meaning, as at the base of religious representations is the paternal protector's desire, „repetarea nesfârşită a dorului de tată" (P. Ricoeur, *op.cit.*, p.271).

Could we speak in this case of a complete deconstruction of the religious phenomenon? We may agree, showing that, besides a no-ethic construction, we are also talking about a no-ematic construction, meaning that, with the secularization of both the form and content of the traditional religious phenomenon, psychoanalysis proposes itself as a counter-religion, in which the self takes all the known divine attributes. But its main deviation touches the religious essence of the presence of God as love; in psychoanalytical perspective, God is not love, but indetermined dynamism, pure energy. Therefore what presents itself as a means of exorcizing complexes for the sake of maintaining spiritual purity (a sort of weak substitute of religious salvation) proves to be, in fact, a principle of impurity itself, the inverted illusion of a decapitation. The same effects are generated by this reductionist approach in all cultural spheres, confronting a paradoxical situation: the tensioned relation between its domain of competence (the inconscious soul) to which it should resume itself, and the field of conscious spirit, that it annexes and in the name of which it seeks to „save" the soul. On one hand, psychoanalysis reduces the superior to the inferior, the objective to the subjective but, on the other, by a programatic methodologic work (of rationalist essence) it does the exact opposite. The ontological legitimacy of such an approach to religion, as well as its utility in the phenomenological field remain under doubt.

3. Therefore, „what is the use of psychoanalitical Hermeneutics?"

A *first answer* is offered by the very philosophical frame of the relation spirit – soul, as, like V. Dem. Zamfirescu mentions, „the first chapter of a philosophy of the inconscious edifiede by the support of psychoanalysis, a chapter about „the purity of the spirit", can only be written if we do not situate psychoanalytic Hermeneutics on the field of the traditional philosophic subject of the relation between spirit and soul". In Hegel's view (*The Philosophy of the Spirit*), the spirit is the universal, and the soul is associated to the singularity; belonging to nature, „the heart" is subjective and – as a consequence assumed by psychoanalysis – the illness of the spirit (the loss of the universal's autonomy) generates the accentuation of the egocentric determinations of the soul, which represents an attempt to the purity of the spirit and therefore a weakening of spiritual censorship. But this association of the consciousness with the spirit (in a Hegelian perspective) and of the inconscious with the soul created an non-working relation. The fundamental idea of a philosophy of the inconscious based on psychoanalysis is that spiritual impurity does not operate a reduction by a false hierarchy spirit – soul. It only shows the „disguised implication of the soul on the level of the spirit". It is not as much the functional autonomy of the Freudian super-ego that will represent the object of this philosophy, but the inconscious spirit, the Jungian concept as a dynamic element of the archetypes of the collective inconscious. However, the dialectics of the pure and impure is especially functional on the level of the conscious spirit *affected* by singular elements of the inconscious soul. Therefore, the spirit's impurity result from the fact that, although not derived from the soul, it is not independent of it, but only autonomous, being „carried" by the latter (just like the superior is supported by the inferior); so that the living spirit, the embodied soul, includes „elements that are heterogenous to it", which produces the

tension between the two levels. By such a dialectic euphemism, „the spirit's impurity is one of the possible solutions for the tension between spirit and soul". And than, following L. Klages, whether the spirit becomes impure by embodiment, as this is the only way it is trully alive, a relation in which the soul has a completely secondary role, being united with the body or simply excluded from the equation; or the spirit opposes life, which it tries to destroy or, on the contrary, raise from the individual to the unviersal. The resulting conclusions fall into the absurde or, in the best case, into paradox. On one hand, the spirit of life is impurity itself, as it keeps itself pure only in the lack of any relation with the soul's otherness; on the other, being the opposing pole of life (union body *and* soul), it denies it, like any altering otherness, with the assumed risk of remaining outside life. In both cases, the concept results from the hard core of any type of purism. By the mortification and parasitation of the vital principle represented by the soul, the spirit is itself subjected to an de-vitalizing ascension. It protects its purity with the fatal risk of degenerating life. Thus, its purity does not exist; only impurity exists, the *generous* mixture of life.

„Ne vom referi doar la ideea impurităţii spiritului – says V. Dem. Zamfirescu – , în a cărei dezvoltare şi adâncime rezidă aportul hermeneuticii psihanalitice la problematica relaţiei spirit – suflet". The principles of psychoanalysis as Hermeneutics inherit this problem, harmonizing it with that of the relation between nature and culture. The soul is equivaled with the naturality that is unaccepted by culture (spirit), refulated into the inconscious. „The return of the refulated" under a camouflaged form represent in this context the act by which a latent meaning of instinctual *nature*, over which a manifest (conscious) meaning floats, ends-up in culture. And as the spirit's impurity assumes the disguised implication of the soul on the level of the spirit, the symptom, as well as the dream, are marked by impurity, as they are manifestations of the ill spirit, corrupted by the insinuating activity of desire. The interpretation gains here a therapeutical function: by descyphring the latent meaning hidden in the manifest one, it reveals the center of a crisis, ends a frustration, rejects a nevrosis. This is a crisis of the subject confronting, on one hand, the rational censorship of a culture of the spirit that protects its purity (or correctness, as we would call it today) and, on the other hand, the return of the refulated, of a „perverted" soul that undermines purity. In other words, psychoanalitical Hermeneutics finds its main object in the field of a conflict, that is the very breaking of the subject exposed to incontrollable disfunctionalities. The logic of this conflict proves to be, in fact, an analysis of the dynamism of meaningful manifestation which, by interpretation, convert their „nature" and, by sublimation, re-integrate into „culture".

A *second answer* to the question about the object of psychoanalitical Hermeneutics is found in the exigency of objectifying any approach that is specific to the sciences of nature, an approach which should also take into consideration the subjectivity's impurity. Instead, in the sciences of the spirit, and especially in the artistic or religious representations, the problem of objectivity is only considered in a small measure or, if considered, it is still from the perspective of the sciences of nature which, by using the method, trust that they *find* the *entire* truth, when in fact they only have access to the so-called objective truth, that of the spirit for which nature is a province. In the terms of the philosophy of the inconscious, the goal sought for by psychoanalitical Hermeneutics is „the clarification of the soul by identifying the elements related to the inconscious soul, the infantil soul". Eventually, it is not the soul itself that is of interest, but the soul's

health, as it should be able to distinguish what belongs to it and what doesn't. This way, the soul will always remain a stranger to the spirit. It gains its freedom not by repressing the soul, but by the simple fact of consciousness of its existence. Psychoanalytic Hermeneutics, argues V. Dem. Zamfirescu, allows the spirit to grow, „eliberându-l de lestul sufletului inconştient, pe care ar trebui să-l poarte, dacă n-ar şti de el".

But the purity the soul aspires to is not representable in the real; it is meant to exist „în conştiinţa dureroasă de a fi non-pur", according to Vl. Jankelevitch, which introduces the non-sense of pure consciousness, as to be aware of your own purity means in fact to have the awareness of impurity. In other words, the awareness of purity is an impure awareness and purity is always inconscious (unaware). „Conştiinţa alungă puritatea, iar puritatea dă afară conştiinţa", adds the French philosopher in *Le Pur et l'Impur* (Flammarion, Paris, 1960). For the spirit, the soul is different, the other, the *otherness which alters*. It suffers, in relation to the soul, of a fratricide complex; in relation to that „you" which is alike and still different, another, the spirit sets a distance, ca cast difference. To touch the soul means to degrade it and to contaminate it, to overload it with what it does not know. If the spirit cannot be pure, but can be free (in Nietzsche's view), than its freedom has something of the purist dogmatismn for which impurity is accidental, a non-substantial appearance which cannot *touch* the *untouchable* essence. In other words, the impurity the soul introduces in the spirit is (psychoanalitically) treated as an anomaly, as a malformation. But the spirit does not only suffer of this complex, but also of a trully hypohondrous complex, attempting to protect itself from any threat comming from the soul, from any confusion. Confusion means mixture, indistinction and regression: shortly said, a principle of error. Taking the place of religion, in modern times, psychoanalysis wants the impurity of the soul to be an extreme solution to the chaos produced by the twilight of the gods „Extremismul modernilor, says Jankélévitch, este un purism disperat", if not the very violent antidote to the great compromise. Who will find a *modus vivendi* with the impurity of a world the simplicity of which has become a memory and the welfare of which is more than suspect?

To this question, the philosopher of the inconscious will answer: psychoanalitical Hermeneutics, according to which impurity means to substitute it with an intelligeable (pure) interpretation. Since the inconscious soul's impurity presents itself as an illusion, the psychoanalitical interpretation becomes a strategy of suspicion and a fight agains occultation. The hermeneutical field of the dream in which the interpret captures the symbols of the defulated soul offers itself as a complex of disimulated signification to be descyphered. The work of this interpretation aspires to un-mystify and reduce illusions, a first illusion being that of the purity of consciousness; its fundamental category is „raportul ascuns – dezvăluit sau, dacă preferăm, simulat – manifestat" (P. Ricoeur, *Despre interpretare*…, ed.cit., p.43). But it is not only the inconscious soul that parasitates the spirit, compromising its eminence, but, as a result, the latent meaning manifested in a significant scenery of the illness, in a text that offers itself to interpretation but is nevertheless corrupted by the very act of defulation. If defulation is a manifestation of the impure, the meaning it offers needs the light of suspicion, of doubt over what it *appears* to be. In order to show the „falsity" of the codification of a latent meaning in a manifest, illusory one, psychoanalitic Hermeneutics descypheres by suspicion. To enter the false consciousness means to apriorically interpret it as an impure consciousness, and the meaning manifested by it is suspected to be altered by an inconscious Intentionality. The extension of the field of knowledge (of the free spirit) is only possible by the un-

mystification of the meaning, in other words by the conversion of its otherness („the foreign body" of a meaning that must be „extracted") into the „healing" light of interpretation. The return of the refulated, of his irrational face, *sauvage,* becomes inversion, of nature into culture, with an absorbtion of the soul into the spirit. This conquering spirit is „the free spirit by excelency", the pure spirit which, according to Nietzsche, „se joacă naiv, *fără intenţie* (*s.n.*), dintr-un preaplin de belşug şi putere, cu tot ceea ce s-a numit până acum sfânt, bun, *de neatins*" (*s.n.*). Freedom based on the exorcization of intention responsible for the act of mystification. As intention is an illusion of the untouchabble; nothing can be better put into intention than the projection in appearance, as a disimulated perspective of the possible, just as nothing offers better the intention of emptiness (emptying of any signification) than the demasking of its illusion of touching without being touched itself. From here, not only the psychoanalytic Hermeneut's suspicion but also the suspicion of the free spirit itself, which „are datoria de a fi neîncrezător, de a privi lumea duşmănos din toate abisurile bănuielilor" (*Dincolo de bine şi de rău*, 32). The ill look is the non-intentional look, therefore pure as it is untouched; it looks without being looked at by anything. It is, like in psychoanalysis, a free look, *because* it doubts any desfigurating intention. Secularized an un-mythicized (in a different meaning of the term than that used by Bultmann), psychoanalytic Hermeneutics – and the philosphy of the inconscious it gives a method to – attempts to liberate the spirit, reading in the manifest meaning the latent meaning of an impure intention. But the presumed purification is the result of an impure work, that of any desire that has passed through the severe filter of reason, rationality that always has to confront the returned refulated, the strager who claims his right to difference. The Hermeneutics of impurity is itself impure. These disciplines of the real, argues Ricoeur, may actually miss the gift of imagination and the apparition of the possible - „nu le lipsesc oare harul imaginaţiei şi apariţia posibilului? Iar acest har al Imaginaţiei nu are el nimic în comun cu Cuvântul înţeles ca Revelaţie?" (*op.cit.*, p.46). This question persists, to paraphrase the French philosopher, into finding out the point till which such a debate may be approached in the limits of a philosophy of the inconscious that, in order to honor its hermeneutical exigency, must remain a *reflection* on the ontological roots of understanding. It must assume until the end, as Nietzsche says, the tragic destiny of the one „at which no god looks any more".

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